

THE NEW WORLD MEETS THE OLD:
GERMAN-AMERICANS AND THE TEMPERANCE STRUGGLE IN OHIO
1870 – 1875

By

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Abstract

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(Under the Direction of DR. JOHN DAVID SMITH)

In the middle decades of the nineteenth century more than 3,000,000 immigrants arrived on American shores from the provinces and principalities that comprised the German Confederation. Most arrived seeking economic opportunities, others fled to escape political persecution. While they shared a foundational German language, regional dialects separated them. Moreover, they arrived harboring the same provincial, religious and class animosities that animated life in Germany. Survival in their new homeland against the ever-present specter of nativism, driven largely by the racial, economic and class conflicts that split the nation, required German immigrants to construct their common ethnicity.

This study compares and contrasts how German immigrants negotiated their place in their adopted homeland's society within the context of American life at the mid-point of the nineteenth century and how the threat posed to the immigrants' deep cultural attachment to "public festivity" helped to define German-American ethnicity. The struggle pitted the European ideology of "liberal nationalism," a belief system articulated by Enlightenment philosophers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, against American reform movements largely informed by a post-millennial strain of Puritanism that was an outgrowth of the Second Great Awakening. The twenty-five years between 1850 and 1875 saw an increasingly militant temperance movement, one that moved beyond simple principle of moral suasion that characterized it over the course of the previous quarter century to a movement that sought

restrictive legislative reforms banning outright the sale and manufacture of a wide range of alcoholic beverages.

In the eyes of Ohio's German-Americans, the temperance movement presented an existential threat to their right to "public festivity," a common element of their culture that united them all – Catholics and Protestants, Bavarians and Prussians, the conservative "Grays" and the radical "Greens." While the confrontation between German-Americans and temperance reformers took place across the Midwest in the early-to mid-1870s, the size of the German-American community in Ohio, particularly in Cincinnati, and the zeal of the reformers render it an ideal observation point. The Ohio legislature adopted the nation's first post-war prohibitory legislation in 1870, directly threatening the German-Americans' festive culture. A bitter fight in the state's 1873 - 1874 constitutional convention over whether or not the state had the right to license the sale of alcohol offered a sharp contrast between the opposing sides. Finally, Ohioans launched the nationwide Women's Temperance Crusade of 1873 – 1874, a movement that eventually spawned the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

The exploration of contemporary newspaper accounts, memoirs of reformers, official records of the proceedings of Ohio's constitutional convention, and an examination of German-American voting patterns in the middle decades of the nineteenth century offers a clear lens into the confrontation between German-Americans and native-born reformers committed to shaping a "moral" America. These sources reveal how the German immigrants' struggle to retain their right to public festivity helped shape the development of a German-American ethnicity in the United States. The present study argues that the battle that began in Ohio in 1870 with the passage of the Adair Liquor Law provided the nascent foundation for the establishment of today's German-American identity.

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or struggling to illuminate some obscure slice of American history. Her understanding of my odd quest made the journey all the more enjoyable.

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Chapter One

Introduction

In 1909, Cornell University professor Albert Bernhardt Faust published his two-volume *The German Element in the United States with Special Reference to Its Political, Moral, Social, and Educational Influence* that served as the standard narrative of German immigration to the United States until the 1940s. While Faust documented evidence of the arrival of German immigrants to the New World as early as 1562, he located the first permanent German settlement, consisting of seventeen immigrants, in Germantown, near Philadelphia in 1683.¹ German immigration proceeded at a steady pace over the next century so that by 1800 nearly 500,000 German-Americans were living in the United States, a total that amounted to almost ten percent of the total population of the country at the time.² Between the census of 1820 and the census of 1880, however, nearly three million more Germans flooded the country, accounting for nearly one in every three immigrants to the United States.³ In the decade prior to the Civil War, German immigration reached its apogee – nearly nine out of ten continental European immigrants to the United States arrived from one of the regions that comprised the post-1871 united Germany.⁴

Europeans entering the country in this period, as Bruce Levine noted, arrived in United States at a decisive turning in the country's national development. Beyond the social and political questions arising from the regional conflict over slavery, the nation's free labor force, in the three decades before the outbreak of the Civil War, shifted from primarily an agricultural basis to an economy where nearly half the labor force worked for wages.⁵ Immigration both in sheer numbers and in the newcomers' largely urban settlement patterns further destabilized

American cultural and political life. German immigrants predominantly settled in the United States' urban areas – by the end of the nineteenth century thirty percent of German immigrants were living in America's eight largest cities.⁶ At the same time, three of the century's most significant reform movements – abolitionism, women's suffrage, and temperance – roiled the country's public conversations.

German immigrants arrived with both a commitment to their new homeland and a set of deep cultural attachments that frequently ran counter to the forces animating reform in the United States. This study compares and contrasts how German immigrants negotiated their place in their adopted homeland's society within the context of American life at mid-point of the nineteenth century and how the threat posed by the reform movement to the immigrants' deep cultural attachment to "public festivity" helped to define German-American ethnicity. The struggle pitted the European ideology of "liberal nationalism," a belief system articulated by Enlightenment philosophers in the late 18th and early 19th century, against American reform movements largely informed by a strain of American Puritanism that was an outgrowth of the Second Great Awakening. The twenty-five years between 1850 and 1875 saw an increasingly militant temperance movement, one that moved beyond the simple principle of moral suasion that characterized it over the course of the previous quarter century to a movement that sought restrictive legislative reforms banning outright the sale and manufacture of a wide range of alcoholic beverages.

The first chapter, largely historiographical in nature, examines the roots of the confrontation between mid-nineteenth century German immigrants whose cultural attachment to public festivity ran counter to the temperance movement largely populated by native-born, evangelical Protestants. For the newcomers, the divide challenged them to consider their

willingness to assimilate into American culture or to forge a separate German-American identity. Chapter two narrows the focus to the post-Civil War rise of the temperance movement, in the form of the 1870 Adair Liquor Law – legislation adopted in Ohio intended to curb the sale of alcoholic beverages by providing for civil damages paid by the seller of alcoholic beverages to the families of “habitual drunkards.” Thanks to the provisions of the Adair Law, the temperance question provoked significant debates in the legislature, within the state’s 1873 -1874 Constitutional Convention, in the state’s judicial system, and among Ohio’s various newspaper editors. Fears over attempts to amend or repeal the law triggered the events examined in the third chapter – the confrontation between German-Americans and the thousands of evangelical Christian women who formed the 1873 – 1874 Women’s Temperance Crusade (WTC) in Ohio. Finally, the fourth chapter examines the aftermath of the five years of feverish temperance activity in the state.

End Notes

¹ Albert Bernhardt Faust, *The German Element in the United States with Special Reference to Its Political, Moral, Social, and Educational Influence*, Vol. 2 (1909; Reprint; New York: Steuben Society of America, 1927), 25.

² Don Heinrich Tolzmann, *The German-American Experience* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2000), 112.

³ *Ibid.*, 447.

⁴ Bruce Levine, *The Spirit of 1848: German Immigrants, Labor Conflict, and the Coming of the Civil War* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁶ Walter D. Kamphoefner, Wolfgang Helbich, and Ulrike Sommer, *News from the Land of Freedom*, trans. by Susan Carter Vogel (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991) 12.

Chapter Two

German-Americans' Confrontation with the Temperance Movement:

A Historiographical Analysis

While the confrontation between German-Americans and temperance reformers occurred across the Midwest in the early-to-mid 1870s, the size of the German-American community in Ohio, particularly in Cincinnati, and the zeal of the reformers render it an ideal observation point. Cincinnati's demographics offer a particularly clear vantage point to examine how German-Americans confronted and negotiated the temperance movement. In a little over a half-century Cincinnati's population grew from 750 in 1800 to 161,044 in 1860.¹ At the dawn of the Civil War, Cincinnati ranked as the third largest manufacturing center in the United States and was home to 43,470 German-born residents or one in four citizens of the Queen City.²

Beyond the size of Cincinnati's German-American population, the economic importance of the brewing industry in the Queen City makes it central to this narrative. Contemporary observers estimated that by 1870 some \$33,000,000 had been invested in the brewing and distilling businesses in Cincinnati and the industry employed between 30,000 and 40,000 first- and second-generation German-Americans.³ At the close of the Civil War, German-owned breweries completely dominated the local brewing industry, making the conflict with the temperance movement a fight for both personal and economic liberty.⁴

One of the early methodological problems a historian encounters when tracing the nineteenth-century German immigrant experience is defining who is a member of the German-American community. The United States Census Bureau, in its introduction to the 1880 census report, proclaimed the children of German-born parents were, by definition, American, not

German or German-American. In describing the “Over the Rhine” section of Cincinnati, however, the report noted that 90,000 Germans lived in that section of the city, and that “it would not be incorrect to speak of a child of German parents, perhaps himself speaking the German language and living almost exclusively of that nationality, as a German.”⁵ G. A. Dobbert illustrated in his 1964 dissertation that at the end of the nineteenth century a “newly arrived immigrant would find himself in distinct but not unfamiliar surroundings: streets lined with row houses and apartments . . . with doorways recessed in the European manner. Nearby were shops, saloons, concert halls, churches, all of the requirements of a self-contained community.” Most importantly to the immigrant, “German was heard on the streets.”⁶ For the purposes of this study, the designation of German-American will include both first-generation German immigrants and their offspring.

When approaching an analysis of nineteenth-century German immigration, a second key methodological obstacle to overcome is the idea of the German-American community as a monolith united by common language, religion and social customs. As John Higham noted, most Germans arriving in the United States prior to 1871 did not understand their nationality as German, but instead “thought of themselves as the people of a particular local area – a village or at most a province. They were not Germans but Würtembergers, Saxons, and Westphalians”⁷ Stephen Ross, in his study of the lives of nineteenth-century industrial workers in Cincinnati, noted that the “regional hostilities which had plagued Germans in their homeland, were also brought to Cincinnati.”⁸ Fredericke Huake, the editor of one of Cincinnati’s German language newspapers, the *Volksfreund*, observed: “The Plattdeutsche is against the High German, the Swabian against the Barvarian, the Würtemberger against the Prussian.”⁹ The mix was made even more complex thanks to the divisions between the long-time, generally more conservative

residents, the “Grays,” and the more radical post-1848 arrivals, known as the “Greens.” German Protestants and German Catholics harbored deep antipathies toward each other as well, creating deep divisions in the German sections of American cities.

Higham argued, however, that the process of submerging these local identities into a wider nationality occurred “speedily, in most cases,” facilitated by the “special bond a common language provides.”¹⁰ Other significant external societal pressures confronted German immigrants and helped to forge the creation of a unified identity. Beyond language and other cultural touch points, the alienation that immigrants felt “in a new, strange, English-speaking, and increasing xenophobic land,” combined with chronic societal problems of unemployment and poverty “nourished the development of an all-German national identity.”¹¹

In 1942, Carl Wittke remarked that German-Americans “were bitterly resentful of blue laws, Puritan sabbath observance, and the rising temperance ‘swindle,’ and even German Lutherans and Catholics agreed . . . such phenomena were peculiarly offensive manifestations of a Puritan spirit which was utterly contrary to their Continental ideas of personal liberty.”¹² Luke Ritter suggested that “political nativism set the stage for the creation of the very hybrid ethnic-American political identities” that nativists feared.¹³ Ritter observed that the “heightened intensity of disagreement between native-born Americans and German immigrants” primarily over issues of temperance and observance of the Sabbatarians’ strict enforcement of Sunday laws and the reformers’ restriction of the right to “public festivity,” helped immigrants “from various provinces of the German Confederation to forge a lasting ethnic identity in the United States.”¹⁴

The process of forging this new ethnic identity as German-Americans hindered both the immigrants’ capacity and desire to fully assimilate into American life. Echoing the long-discredited Teutonic-germ theory that linked the Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic traditions, Matthew

Fry Jacobson suggested that “Anglo-Saxdom represented one branch of a freedom-loving, noble race of Germanic peoples” and, therefore, German immigrants might be more readily welcomed into American society than the Irish, Scots, or Italians.¹⁵ Despite their shared ethnic roots with native-born Americans, German immigrants, fearing the loss of their native culture and traditions, remained hesitant to fully assimilate into American culture. In 1859, the editor of the Stuttgart, Germany magazine *Illustrierte Welt* asked: “Wouldn’t it be wiser to seek the cultural-historical task of the German emigration in a melting of Germanic idealism with the realism of the Anglo-Saxon.”¹⁶

A half century later, Faust’s fawning narrative, *The German Element*, echoed the *Illustrierte Welt*’s suggestion and proudly waved the banner of German identity arguing that German immigrants did not assimilate in American society but actually led the formation of the melting pot that reflected modern America. He concluded *The German Element* by declaring: “The German traits are such as to unite the various formative elements of the American people more securely and harmoniously.” After noting the contributions of the English, the Scots, and the Irish to American society, Faust said this about the German contribution: “. . . thus linking the great national elements together, the German provides the backbone, with the physical and mental qualities of vigor, sturdiness, and vitality, and the moral tone of genuineness, virility, and aspirations.”¹⁷

Writing on the eve of World War II, in 1940, John A. Hawgood traced the immigration patterns of Germans in the first half of the nineteenth century and their confrontation with American culture. German-Americans believed their native German culture to be far superior to American culture, and were antagonized by the “aggressive American Puritanism.”¹⁸ They feared Americanization and set about establishing their own “communities in America as new

Germanies or little Germanies.”¹⁹ Throughout the 1840s and 1850s “new Germanies,” thanks to the efforts of German settlement societies, sprang up as small towns across the Midwest and in Texas. Hawgood noted that no “New Germany” on a grand scale ever materialized and “only a few counties in Missouri, Illinois, and Texas may have been effected in any permanent way” by German immigrant attempts at state-building.²⁰ Hawgood’s conclusion posited that over time German culture largely disappeared and, instead of assisting in the formation of American culture, German immigrants simply vanished into the melting pot.

Kathleen Neils Conzen identified three models of assimilation that German-Americans evolved over the middle decades of the 19th century. German immigrants, in the earliest years of mass migration, sought to maintain their “Germanness,” separate and apart from an American identity. Conzen noted that, in the 1840s, “those arguing for the necessity of preserving German culture drowned out voices favoring Anglo conformity.”²¹ Faced with the rising tide of Know-Nothingism in the 1850’s, German immigrants, feared that the “irresistible force of American society” would overwhelm their culture. In response they proposed a separatist model where isolated German communities or colonies existed within the larger American “melting pot.”²² The final post-Civil War phase, roughly coinciding with the drive for German unification in 1871, centered on a militantly “Germanocentric” argument, asserting that Germans held a “special right . . . to support an ethnic existence in America because of the special gifts that they would ultimately bring into the melting pot.”²³

Jon Gjerde provided a close analysis of German and Northern European ethnic immigration to the upper Midwest to expand Conzen’s argument for a “special place in the melting pot.” Far from fully assimilating as Americans, German immigrants found that the freedom of the West enabled them to “develop a complementary identity that pledged adherence

to both American citizenship and ethnic adherence.”²⁴ Gjerde argued that rural ethnic communities were “animated by a curious amalgam of cultural retention, and cultural change, tradition and modernity, authority and freedom . . .” allowing “rural ethnic enclaves to remain insular.”²⁵

Where immigrants chose to settle had a significant impact on both the pattern of assimilation and on the factors that helped to forge a separate ethnicity. German-Americans were far more highly urbanized than their fellow American citizens – thirty percent of all German immigrants to the United States lived in the eight largest cities in the United States.²⁶ This trend was especially true among younger immigrants, who found employment opportunities better in cities and the cost of living comparatively low.²⁷

The constant flow of immigration to the United States over the middle decades of the nineteenth century provided urban German communities with a continuous sense of renewal, in contrast to the slower pace of change in rural immigrant settlements. James M. Berquist that the German-American community in American cities “persisted for most of its life as one diffused rather broadly throughout the urban area.”²⁸ He noted that employment patterns, particularly proximity to their workplaces, plus the sheer size of the German immigrant population, drove the dispersal of German-Americans throughout an urban area.²⁹ However, despite the scattered nature of German-American residential and employment patterns, the core area – the original German immigrant neighborhoods – remained the chief focal point for German institutional life.³⁰ In urban areas the “sheer numbers of newcomers made possible the proliferation of social organizations, schools, newspapers and businesses . . . “ so that a German immigrant community in an American city was “not the equivalent of a single German village but like a score of villages each overlapping in the same limited area.”³¹

Riven by regional, dialect, political, and religious differences, German-Americans seldom came to consensus on the major questions of the day. Some observers argue that the nativism rampant in American political life in the 1850s made German-Americans retreat into a “forced isolation” from the mainstream of American life and acted as unifying agent for the immigrant community in the process. The diversity and the vitality of the urban environment, far from uniting the immigrants, actually “favored the atomization of the German community.”³² Berquist noted that ethnic “communities in larger cities served as distribution centers for immigrants seeking other frontiers,” ensuring a constant flow of German-Americans through the community.³³ The construction and maintenance of what he called “the imposing edifice of the German community” was not built on stone, but on the shifting sands of an ever-changing flow of German immigrants and their diversity of religion, culture, class, and politics.³⁴ The fight for personal liberty offered a standard for all German immigrants to rally around.

The temperance battles in America’s urban centers offer the clearest view of how the German-Americans’ defense of personal freedom helped to shape German-American identity and ethnicity. Faust argued that while German immigrants strove desperately to protect their religion and language, “they have been far more tenacious of their social customs and principles of living.”³⁵

Conzen asserted that nationality or ethnic origin “shaped one’s character and modes of thought . . .” meaning, for Germans, full assimilation – in a structural sense – was unattainable. “Immigrants could be American in their workaday world,” she noted, “but if they were to retain a less prosaic sphere in their lives . . . they saw no option but to remain German in their leisure time.”³⁶ Alison Clark Efford noted that Germans did not migrate to the United States “in order to lose themselves in an undifferentiated intermixture.” She declared: “Immigrants were instead to

retain their unique characteristics, which in the German case meant *Gemüthlichkeit*, a deeply satisfying sense of conviviality.”³⁷ The rich historiography of the temperance movement reveals the uneasy relationship between German-Americans and the largely evangelical, Protestant, and nativist forces who drove the great social movements of the nineteenth-century. Understanding the forces that animated nineteenth century American reformers and how the values and experiences German immigrants brought from Europe formed their response explains German-Americans’ stubborn insistence on protecting their right to public festivities.

Ian R. Tyrell chronicled three phases of antebellum temperance reform. The first phase, launched in the 1820s, featured a partnership between businessmen concerned that the rising levels of drink inhibited industrial growth. A second, later phase, generally in the 1840s featured the organization of temperance societies pledged to personally abstain from alcoholic beverages, such as the Washingtonians, among the lower and lower-middle classes. The third phase of the movement, beginning in 1851, marked the rise in state-inspired legal prohibitions. German immigrants found state-sponsored intervention to be particularly onerous as legal restrictions violated their understanding of the state’s responsibility to protect, not restrict, individual rights. Tyrell noted that German-American objections to temperance extended beyond their view of it as an abridgement of their right to enjoy their festive culture, but also as an economic threat, citing the scope of the brewing industry as a major employer of German immigrants.³⁸

W. J. Rorobaugh located the beginning of the temperance movement in the early decades of the nineteenth century in the aftermath of the Second Great Awakening and the consequent fusion of Puritan and Calvinistic theologies into a new, uniquely American strain of Puritanism.³⁹ George McKenna concurred that the nineteenth-century version of Puritanism which emerged in the early decades of the century was a product of the Second Great

Awakening, but his analysis extended the movement's impact beyond temperance reform efforts. Comprised predominantly of middle-class, evangelical, Protestants, the new breed of Puritans adopted a post-millennial ideology that espoused a theological position predicting the arrival of Christ's second coming only after a thousand-year epoch of a sinless, godly, and homogenous American society. The emerging theology's imperative for homogeneity, dominated by the native-born ethnicity, gave rise to the growing sense of nativism in antebellum America leaving little room for the expanding immigrant communities in the United States. McKenna labelled it, "a stifling mix of small-town morality and religious fundamentalism."⁴⁰

For American Protestant evangelicals, the western United States offered the best hope for their morally pure, pious, post-millennial world view. Slavery and alcohol consumption presented societal obstacles that obstructed the pathway to moral victory, and reformers believed it necessary to eliminate both from American society. Joseph R. Gusfield suggested that the "ethical foundations" of the Sabbatarian and temperance movements were "deep in this stream of Protestant thought."⁴¹ America's unique strain of Puritan thought held that "whatever is unrelated or antagonistic to the development or functioning of moral character is wasteful and immoral."⁴²

By the late 1820s, according to Kyle Volk, the evangelical groundswell resulting from the Second Great Awakening produced a "grand reform movement promising a pathway to national and even global deliverance."⁴³ Leading reformers, Volk noted, "spoke a language of moral nationalism and insisted that the survival of America's great political experiment depended on the extensive prevalence and diffusion of moral and religious principles."⁴⁴ He placed the conflicts with the temperance and anti-sabbatarianism movements and German immigrants into the larger context of "majority tyrannies" wherein voting blocs could compel

certain moral behaviors that abridged the rights of minorities such as German immigrants. Volk noted that German revolutionaries “condemned America’s majorities for being more tyrannical than the worst despots of the Old World.”⁴⁵

Conzen identified *Bildung*, an ideology rooted in the writings of such German Enlightenment philosophers Goethe, Kant and Schiller, as a dominant strain of thought that emerged in the latter decades of the eighteenth century among Germany’s middle classes. *Bildung* offered a way for individuals to accept that “man possessed both sense and sensibility, both mind and feeling, that he lived in both a world of art, learning, and friendship.”⁴⁶ Conzen contended that, by the early nineteenth century, “*Bildung* Germans” recognized the “important role of *Geselligkeit* – voluntary sociability – in the full development of both sides of human character” and had come to regard “folk festivals as a public inalienable right.”⁴⁷ The emergence of *Bildung* among the German middle classes coincided with the rise of German immigration to the United States in the 1830s, bringing a culture of festivity, of Sunday celebrations, and a deep attachment to a right of sociability in direct confrontation with the Puritan mandate of moral nationalism.

Zachary Stuart Garrison expanded Conzen’s definition of *Bildung* to an ideology that combines “the English word *education* with character formation and moral cultivation into a general spirit of self-improvement and self-consciousness.”⁴⁸ *Bildung*, in Garrison’s estimation, promised “to construct a culture wherein rights and freedoms were guaranteed by the state, thus allowing individuals to flourish.”⁴⁹ While native-born reformers – sabbatarians, abolitionists, and temperance advocates – sought government intervention to establish their moral vision of post-millennial society, German immigrants came to the United States seeking a state that guaranteed their rights, not limited them. Christian Essellen, a German refugee of the European Revolutions

of 1848 and editor of *Atlantis* magazine, epitomized the conflict between moral and liberal nationalists by arguing that, based upon the promise of the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution's guarantees, "one need not chew tobacco, nor go bankrupt, nor speculate in lots, nor become a temperance fanatic, nor go into church, or chase after Negroes. The decision, the firm will, and the capability to become a free man, Americanizes us completely."⁵⁰

The clash between the conflicting ideologies proved unavoidable. Wittke observed: "Proud of their culture, they [German immigrants] arrived in America when the great struggle with American Puritanism could hardly have been avoided. The radical German leaders were bitterly resentful of blue laws, Puritan Sabbath observance, and the rising temperance 'swindle,' . . . which was utterly contrary to their Continental ideas of personal liberty."⁵¹

End Notes

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³ Jed Dannebaum, *Drink and Disorder: Temperance Reform in Cincinnati from the Washingtonian Revival to the WCTU* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 16.

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⁹ Ibid.

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¹¹ Levine, *The Spirit of 1848*, 83.

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²⁶ Kamphoefner, *News from the Land of Freedom*, 12.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ James M. Berquist, “German Communities in American Cities: An Interpretation of the Nineteenth Century Experience,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 4, no. 1 (Fall 1984): 11.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 9.

³¹ Ibid., 13.

³² Ibid., 16.

³³ Berquist, *Daily Life in Immigrant America*, 144.

³⁴ Berquist, “German Communities in American Cities,” 23.

³⁵ Faust, *The German Element*, Vol. 2: 378.

³⁶ Conzen, “Ethnicity as Festive Culture,” 54.

³⁷ Alison Clarke Efford, *German Immigrants, Race, and Citizenship in the Civil War Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 45.

³⁸ Ian R. Tyrell, *Sobering Up: From Temperance to Prohibition in Antebellum America, 1800 – 1860* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979), 301.

³⁹ W. J. Rorbaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 182.

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⁴⁶ Kathleen Neils Conzen, "Ethnicity as Festive Culture: Nineteenth-Century German America on Parade," in *The Invention of Ethnicity*, ed. Werner Sollors (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 49.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁴⁸ Garrison, *German Americans on the Middle Border*, 5.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Kathleen Neils Conzen, "German-Americans and the Invention of Ethnicity," in *America and the Germans: An Assessment of a Three Hundred Year History*, Vol. 1, eds. Frank Trommler and Joseph McVeigh (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 136.

⁵¹ Carl Wittke, "Minority Peoples in a Nation at War," 87.

Chapter Three

Legislative and Constitutional Conflicts

The Adair Liquor Law attracted little attention upon its passage by the Ohio General Assembly in April 1870. Mostly ignored by historians, the measure ignited a five-year battle for “personal liberty” that dominated party politics, ethnic confrontations, gender conflict, and newspaper headlines across the state. Thanks to the support of tens of thousands of middle-and-upper-class Protestant women committed to the temperance cause, threats to the law proved to be the spark that led to the 1875 launch of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU).

The Adair Law modified Ohio’s 1854 liquor act to allow spouses, parents and employers of “habitual drunkards” to sue saloonkeepers and their landlords for up to \$5,000 each in damages – nearly \$300,000 in 2020 dollars – in compensation for the economic ruin inflicted by the sale of alcoholic beverages to the plaintiff’s relative or employee. The bill enjoyed bipartisan support in both legislative houses – eleven Democrats joined fifty-two Republicans in the House to pass the bill by a margin of sixty-three to thirty and, in the Senate five Democrats joined twelve Republicans to secure passage of the bill. Only one Republican in each legislative chamber opposed the measure, foreshadowing the partisan battlelines that defined the conflict over the five years. Both legislators represented Hamilton County (the home of Cincinnati) and each was a German-American – state representative Ernest Kleinschmidt and state senator Michael Goepper.¹

William Adair, a former carriage-maker’s apprentice-turned lawyer turned-legislator, represented northwestern Ohio’s Carroll County (Carrollton) and authored the eponymous legislation in his first term as a member of the Ohio House. Despite serving only two terms in

the Ohio legislature – Adair chose not to run for re-election in 1873, opting, instead, to represent Carroll County in the state Constitutional Convention – his sponsorship of the Adair Liquor Law defined much of his subsequent career. Adair’s obituary, published in the August 1, 1905, *Canton (OH) Repository* carried the headline: “Was Author of Liquor Law” and identified him as the “father of the original civil damage liquor law.”²

Contemporary accounts do not suggest Adair had a long history in or any particular affinity for the temperance movement. The author of an article in the *Cincinnati Commercial* asserted that he would have had no trouble identifying Adair “in a beer garden by the bald spot on the back of his head” after seeing him frequently in similar locales.³ The *Cincinnati Enquirer* offered a more explicit account, observing that Adair “had no constitutional aversion to King Alcohol by partaking in an unusually large quantity of the contraband beverage” on the night after introducing his temperance measure in the House.⁴ In an 1880 review of the Adair Liquor Law, the *Canton Repository* reported that “During all of the time that the bill was in the Assembly he [Adair] was drinking hard; he is said to have pledged many of the votes that were cast for his bill over the whiskey bottle or the beer glass and when at last the bill was passed, he was carried in a drunken stupor from the House. He has never reformed.”⁵

Adair thus came unexpectedly to his role as temperance advocate – he was not, by his own admission, a prohibitionist.⁶ The motivation for authoring the Adair Liquor Law may have been simple revenge. The editors of the *Daily Ohio State Journal* asserted that Adair introduced the bill in retaliation against two Carrollton saloonkeepers and their customers who opposed his election, and circulated rumors in the community “to the effect that he (Adair) was a habitual drinker and given to other vices that rendered him totally unfit to be the spokesman for a sober, industrious, and highly moral community.”⁷ They reported that based upon “private expressions

we have heard members make at various times,” legislators generally considered it to be primarily a local bill and they had no idea of “its conception and the extent of its operations.”⁸

The origins of the Adair Law can be traced to a famous piece of antebellum prohibitory legislation – the 1851 Maine Law. Led by the so-called “Napoleon of Temperance” Neal Dow, reformers in Maine recognized that moral suasion alone proved unequal to the task of overcoming the evils of drink.⁹ Dow proposed a legislative solution that made both the manufacture and the sale of alcohol illegal. In and of itself, such prohibitory legislation was hardly novel, but similar codified restrictions had foundered elsewhere because local authorities were reluctant to enforce prohibitory provisions. The Maine Law’s “genius” was that it empowered ordinary citizens to combine with local authorities to bring criminal actions against violators and enforce the law. The historian Kyle Volk observed that the Maine Law armed local residents “with an easily obtained search warrant, and allowed prohibitionists to enter a business or dwelling suspected of housing illegal liquor and dump any contraband into the gutter.”¹⁰

Temperance advocates in the Buckeye State launched a campaign for their version of the Maine Law in 1853. Perhaps emboldened by the narrow passage (113,237 votes to 104,255 votes) of a referendum amending the 1851 Constitution to bar the state from licensing the sale of alcohol, pro-temperance forces under the leadership of Samuel Cary in 1853 launched an effort to enact a prohibitory legislation that mirrored the Maine Law.¹¹ A leading political figure from Cincinnati, Cary eventually served in the United States Congress and, in 1876, ran as the vice presidential candidate of the Greenback Party in 1876, opposite his fellow Ohioan, Rutherford B. Hayes, the Republican nominee for president. Cary and his followers sought to create a shadow

political party that sought the election of legislative candidates who were confirmed supporters of prohibition.¹²

Despite early attempts by Maine Law supporters in Ohio to gain the German-American community's support for the legislation, most German-American voters were deeply opposed to the measure and argued that prohibition was an "unwarrantable" interference "with private rights."¹³ On election day only about one-third of the legislators who formed the Maine Law slate were successful at the polls, far below the number needed to adopt prohibitory legislation.¹⁴ Cary blamed the defeat on Ohio's burgeoning immigrant population. Contrasting the election results in Cincinnati with those in the Western Reserve of northeastern Ohio, Cary charged: "take out the votes of the German wards" and the supporters of prohibition would have prevailed.¹⁵

The members of the Ohio General Assembly elected in 1853, while unsupportive of the restrictions imposed by the Maine Law, adopted two important provisions for the regulation of the sale and distribution of intoxicating beverages in an 1854 omnibus bill. The first provision barred the sale of liquor by the drink at the point of sale. Hailed initially by temperance advocates as a measure to limit access to alcoholic beverages, in fact the bill's provisions proved to be a Pyrrhic victory for reformers. Waving the "federal stamp" they received to sell liquor, saloonkeepers routinely violated the provision of the law arguing that they plied a legitimate trade based upon the "stamp of approval" the government provided.¹⁶ Those claims, plus the general unpopularity of the legislation, meant that elected officials and legal authorities generally chose to ignore infractions of the statute.

Faced with the failure of Ohio's version of Maine Law in 1853 and the near complete lack of enforcement of the 1854 ban on the sale of liquor by the drink, Ohio's temperance

movement lost momentum by the middle years of the decade. Moreover, as the 1850s progressed, and citizens' attention focused on the era's great sectional debate over slavery, causing the temperance question to fade even further into the background. By 1862, membership in Ohio's Independent Order of Good Templars, the state's leading temperance organization, fell by over 50%, from 5,054 members to 2,392.¹⁷ An editorial in the Cincinnati based *Templar's Magazine* commented that "Temperance and its associate virtues do not flourish in war times and none of the organizations having in view the promotion of total abstinence are making any headway."¹⁸ In *A History of Drink Reform in the United States* (1904), August F. Fehrlant observed that after "the smoke of battle cleared away . . . temperance work had been paralyzed and temperance societies impoverished of membership."¹⁹ While the Civil War temporarily slowed the reform movement's momentum, the conflict also offered the reformers' bitterest opponent – the German-Americans – a new sense of empowerment in their battle with temperance reformers in the post-war years.

German immigrants, throughout the nineteenth century, struggled to retain their "Germanness" – their native language, culture, social customs and family structures – while simultaneously demonstrating their loyalty to their adopted land. In the years preceding the Civil War, the dual nature of German-American loyalties aroused the nativist sentiments of the Know-Nothing Party. The Know-Nothing Party's support of temperance, as an expression of the membership's nativist beliefs, raised deep concerns for German-Americans. As a consequence, until the late 1850s, most German-Americans remained deeply suspicious of the Republican Party, finding within the party's leadership and its platforms the remnants of Know-Nothingism. The bruising battle over Ohio's version of the Maine Law in 1853 further served to unify most German-Americans under the Democratic Party's banner.

Salmon P. Chase, the 1855 Republican gubernatorial candidate, suffered from those concerns thanks to his party's nativist roots. Running with a ticket filled with former members of the Know-Nothing Party, Chase received only 10 percent of the vote in Cincinnati's German-American wards.²⁰ By Lincoln's election in 1860, however, the national Republican Party had largely muted its nativist, Sabbatarian and pro-temperance voices. Attracted by the Party's anti-slavery stance and commitment to the preservation of the Union, German-Americans rewarded Lincoln with 60 percent of their votes.²¹

As the country entered the Civil War, the best evidence of where German-American loyalties lay can be found in their support of the Union effort. Christian B. Keller estimated that, over the course of the war, between 187,000 and 216,000 German-Americans served in the Union Army, comprising as much as 10% of the total northern forces.²² Keller chronicled how German-Americans expressed the dual nature of their citizenship particularly in camp life. Early in the war, the daily business of German regiments, even the language of drill, was in German.²³ Language was not the only cultural element Germans brought with them to camp life. Keller notes that "most regiments were well supplied with beer – considered a necessity of life by Germans everywhere . . ." and, when available, was much appreciated by their native comrades in arms as well.²⁴

German-Americans, in the aftermath of the war, believed their shared sacrifice to preserve the Union answered any doubts about the true nature of their loyalties, earning them a place in the fabric of American life. Writing soon after the war ended, in 1866, the newspaper editor and Forty-Eighter Friedrich Lexow, argued, "what we enjoy here we have earned: the blood of our heroes has dearly bought for us this country as a homeland. We are not foreigners in America, in that we are fully equal with the natives Our nature, our individuality, and

customs have the same entitlements as others.”²⁵ The fight for personal liberty that would erupt in the post-war years in Ohio would test Lexow’s argument to the fullest measure.

Paul Kleppner contended in *The Third Electoral System, 1853 – 1892: Parties, Voters, and Political Cultures* (1979) that while temperance reformers never “lost their enthusiasm,” the war years “dampened their optimism and set the stage for a spasm of organizational activity” in the months following Appomattox.²⁶ Temperance advocates feared that the habits Civil War soldiers formed in camp life would infect family and community life upon their discharge and return home. Eliza D. Stewart, one of the founders of the Women’s Temperance Crusade and an early leader of the WCTU, observed, “Not the least of the long list of evils accompanying army life is that of intemperance, and many of our soldiers returned with an appetite, acquired in the army, fastened upon them.”²⁷

In the years immediately following the war, Kleppner asserted, temperance reformers believed themselves engaged in “a righteous political action” to force the eradication of the beer and liquor trades.²⁸ Louisiana State University historian Gaines M. Foster linked the post-war temperance resurgence to the reformers’ understanding of “the wartime expansion of federal power and the anti-slavery precedent.” The Union victory and the demolition of slavery became the embodiment of “moral nationalism.” Flush with their victory over slavery, drinking became the next immoral activity that reformers attacked.²⁹ In a 2015 article, Susan J. Pearson, contended that post-war reformers “clung to the idea that the Civil War had been a grand demonstration of the power of coercive government action to purge the nation of sin.” For temperance advocates, the true lesson of the war was “the triumph of morality over sin.”³⁰

Ohio’s leading temperance organizations – the Sons of Temperance, the Good Templars, and various church associations – lost no time in rebuilding their memberships after the war’s

end. The Good Templars reported an increase of 100,000 new members in the state in the five years after hostilities ended and the Sons of Temperance claimed an additional 50,000 over the same period.³¹ The editor of the *Cincinnati Enquirer* observed the early stirring of a renewed temperance effort in April 1866, labeling a piece of proposed legislation that would have required all sellers of alcohol to post a \$2,000 bond as a “specimen brick of fanaticism.”³² Hoping to unite all of the disparate organizations in Ohio “friendly to the temperance movement,” reformers called a state convention in October 1867 to establish a permanent state-wide organization aimed at more effectively promoting pro-temperance local and state candidates and legislation. Delegates to the convention refused to align with a specific political party; instead they were urged by leading reformers to “vote for no intemperate man . . . drunkards are unfit to hold any office,” and to vote for no man “who is opposed to the prohibition of the sale of intoxicating liquors of any name as a beverage.”³³

Alarmed by the resurgence in temperance activity, John Katzenmayer, the United States Brewing Association (USBA) secretary, warned: “Just now a note of war is heard coming against us by fanatics, who, in pretending to support Sunday and temperance laws, are in fact trying to annihilate the self-respect and independence of mankind, and liberty of conscience and trade.”³⁴ Formed in 1862 in response to a one dollar per barrel tax levied on the brewing industry by the United States government’s 1862 Revenue Tax Act, the Association provided a powerful lobbying voice in the U. S. Congress. Comprised primarily of German-American brewery owners, the USBA conducted all of its business meetings in German until it resolved to conduct bilingual proceedings in its 1872 Convention, thanks to the increasing numbers of native-born Americans in their ranks.³⁵ In 1864 total beer production in the United States totaled nearly

3,657,183 barrels, creating a strong financial bond between the German-American-dominated brewing industry and the government.³⁶

At the 1867 USBA convention, the legislative committee, drawing the distinction between distilled spirits and malt liquors, warned the convention that “Moral reformers are running wild with unsound notions. Their ignorance of human nature led them into secret combinations to prejudice the minds of people against a trade that, if not interfered with, would bring about great moral reform of the excess use of alcoholic liquors.”³⁷ Responding to the threat posed by “temperance fanatics,” the convention resolved to “. . . use all means to stay the progress of this fanatical party, and to secure our individual rights as citizens, and that we will sustain no candidate, of whatever party, in any election, who is in any way disposed toward the total abstinence cause.”³⁸ Of the sixty-five breweries represented at the convention, eight came from Cincinnati, making it unlikely the Cincinnati delegation required any warning of the post-war stirrings of the temperance movement.³⁹

Both sides of the temperance debate resolved to avoid entanglements with political parties, but instead to focus on the views, habits, and commitments of individual candidates rather than specific party labels. In practice, however, at the state and local levels the Democrats increasingly fielded anti-temperance candidates; while Republicans were generally pro-temperance. For German-Americans, who may have favored the Republican Party’s position on fiscal issues and many social issues, the Party’s alignment with the temperance question was deeply troubling – made more so by the nativist arguments that frequently accompanied the reformers’ strict views on alcohol usage. The Reverend J. W. Osborn, president of the Ohio Temperance Society, opened the 1869 convention by declaring, “The moment you approach our foreign-born citizens with the temperance question, all their rights are interfered with.

Temperance is to them the most flagrant violation of all of the principles of free government, and denying them the privilege of making our children drunkards, filling our alms-houses and penitentiaries . . . [temperance] is a terrible infringement of the rights of freemen.”⁴⁰ German-Americans remembered that the remnants of Know-Nothingism helped form the roots of the modern Republican Party and that the blatant nativism of the sentiments found in their temperance rhetoric harkened back to pre-Civil War tensions.⁴¹

As much as the opposing forces may have wished to refrain from aligning with political parties, the legislature’s adoption of the Adair Liquor Law nevertheless forced the question. The passage of the legislation elicited little initial fanfare. The editorial staff of the *Ohio State Daily Journal* asserted in a March 1872 article that “probably no member of that Legislature, in voting for that bill, had any conception of its scope and the extent of its operations. We feel warranted in saying this from private expressions we have heard members make at various times.”⁴²

Temperance activists across the country, however, quickly grasped the value of extending the capacity of wives, children, and others to recover damages from alcohol sellers. By 1873, nine other states adopted similar legislation, although it is not entirely clear that legislators in different locales fully comprehended the implications of the law.⁴³ Former Illinois governor, Richard B. Ogilvie, in a 1958 article about the 1873 Illinois Dram Shop Law, noted that at the time of the bill’s adoption by the Prairie State’s legislature, “the issue cut across party lines, the old-time politicians not realizing until after the act’s passage the full impact of the movement.”⁴⁴

Whether or not Ohio’s legislators recognized the impact of the Adair Liquor Law at the time of its passage, temperance advocates seized immediately upon its value. While the law did not strictly prohibit the sale or manufacture of beer, wine, and liquor, its civil penalties left the distributors of alcohol – saloons, drug stores, and beer gardens – facing potentially ruinous

financial liabilities, as much as \$150,000 in current dollars in damages for both the saloon owner and his or her landlord. The editorial staff at the *Delaware (OH) Gazette* in February 1871 asserted the Adair Law was “a measure which puts it in the power of this and every other community in the State of Ohio to close up every saloon and utterly exterminate the traffic in intoxicating liquors. However profitable it may be, the traffic can nowhere withstand a vigorous and thorough enforcement of this law.”⁴⁵

Politically unable to accomplish prohibition via legislative means, the temperance attack on saloons, nonetheless, presented a double-edged threat to German-American culture. Joseph R. Gusfield argued that an “attack on the saloon, rather than the drinker located the problem of drinking in contexts which accentuated the conflict of cultures represented by the divergent sides.”⁴⁶ German-Americans charged that the Adair Law provided an equal threat to both their access to beer and the festive nature of their culture – the enjoyment of a beer in the company of co-workers and neighbors, music and singing in a beer hall, and Sundays spent in a beer garden with family and friends. Perry Duis recounted the claim of one Chicago saloonkeeper: “The story goes that when a German comes to America, he looks for just three things – a saloon, a church, and a singing society . . . When Germans drink they do not get mad, but just want to be happy and to sing and be friendly.”⁴⁷

To comprehend fully the impact of the Adair Liquor Law on the German-American community, the centrality of the saloon and the beer garden to German-American way of life must be appreciated. The vast majority of Cincinnati’s German-Americans belonged to the working class, employed in a wide range of industries with a heavy concentration in the brewing industry and its collateral trades, including agriculture, transportation, barrel-making, and, of course, saloonkeeping. In 1874, proprietors with German surnames owned nearly 70% of

Cincinnati's saloons, catering to a German-American population of almost 90,000 residents. Historian Roy Rosenzweig defined the saloon as a "workingman's club" where "public toilets, food, warmth, clean water . . ." were freely available to patrons.⁴⁸ Ethnic saloons, Rosenzweig observed, "provided a center for such ethnic celebrations as weddings and holidays as well as a meeting place for fraternal organization and gangs."⁴⁹ For the tens of thousands of German-Americans who comprised the Queen City's dominant immigrant population, the network of saloons that spread across the city became a "third place" apart from their homes and their workplaces where they could gather and socialize with their fellow immigrants.

The range and quality of the nearly 800 German-owned saloons in Cincinnati varied widely – from establishments that served primarily a "downtown" crowd to small neighborhood taverns. German bars in outlying neighborhoods in Chicago, according to Duis, were "bright as daylight," reflecting the family orientation of German-American-owned establishments.⁵⁰ Duis argued that German saloons were relatively crime-free showing "the common complaint that the saloon destroyed the family" had little relevance in German-American communities.⁵¹

Ohio Governor Rutherford B. Hayes, a temperance advocate who maintained a "dry" White House as president, made a practice of stopping in a Cincinnati beer garden for a morning *schoppen* of beer when visiting the Queen City, suggesting that the establishment and others like it enjoyed a high measure of respectability.⁵² Duis described German beer gardens as "especially attractive to families" with "food that often was as important as the beer, and with music ranging from small brass bands to full orchestras."⁵³ One of Cincinnati's German language newspapers, *Volksfreund*, in an article reprinted in the *Cincinnati Commercial*, labeled the Adair Liquor Law an "oppressive and tyrannical law, an enactment clashing with the spirit of our times, with the freedom of trade and with the personal rights of citizens."⁵⁴ Shuttering ethnic saloons, not only

threatened the livelihoods of saloon owners and employees, but by closing the brewers' most productive means of distributing their product, the entire brewing industry came under direct attack. German-Americans proved unable or unwilling to square their understanding of their saloons and beer gardens with the darker vision of the reformers, who sought to close what they perceived to be dens of iniquity.

The most notorious early action brought under the Adair Liquor Law occurred in Springfield, Ohio, in January 1872. Stewart, the future leader of the temperance fight in Ohio in the coming years, recalled that after she delivered an address entitled "The Liquor Traffic: How to Fight It" in Springfield's Allen Hall, C. M. Nichol, the editor of the *Springfield Republic*, encouraged her to "ask the ladies . . . to hunt up drunkards' wives and encourage them to prosecute under the Adair law, for selling to their husbands, and to stand by them in doing so."⁵⁵ Several days later, Mrs. Mary Hukins responded to this request and filed suit against Barnet Trickle, a "whiskey-seller," for \$300 (approximately \$9,000 in current dollars) in damages under the Adair Liquor Law. Stewart, upon the request of Hukins' attorney, George C. Rawlins, made the closing argument in the case with a emotional plea depicting the "injustice, cruelty and hardships which Mrs. Hukins suffered from the whiskey-seller."⁵⁶ The jury quickly returned a verdict of \$100 for Hukins.⁵⁷ Stewart's success in this case, and the resulting publicity provided by Nichol, effectively launched her temperance career.

Blocker traced the less successful efforts of wives in Fayette County, Ohio, to recover damages over the course of 1871. In the first effort, Elizabeth Bryan filed suit against six dealers, saying all contributed to her husband's dissolution and managed to win all six cases – the courts awarded her a total of \$450. Even then, thanks to appeals filed by the dealers, Bryan did not fully collect her damages until 1875.⁵⁸ Bryan's nearly four-year delay in collecting damages

offered an example of a common source of frustration among most Adair Law plaintiffs. The collective resources of saloonkeepers and brewers helped extend multiple appeals of unfavorable decisions and further slow the wheels of justice.

Of the Fayette County cases Blocker examined, only two others resulted in decision in the women's favor. The October 1871 case brought by Estelle Scott, of Washington Court House, Ohio proves instructive, however. She filed two suits to recover damages, and Blocker noted that "the costs of one suit was guaranteed by most of the village's most prominent men," suggesting that reformers saw the Adair Law as a useful tool to both harass and potentially rid local communities of alcohol sellers.⁵⁹ In a second case, in Springfield where Stewart was again a star witness, Mrs. Anna Saurbier sued Karl Niehaus and his sister (Mrs.) Busjam for \$300 in damages. Stewart noted that upon the jury finding for the plaintiff, "the liquor men were out in force, and pledged themselves to sustain the saloon-keeper in his case."⁶⁰ Both sides of the debate recognized the value of collective action to prosecute and defend the civil actions brought under the Adair Law.

Historian Ruth Bordin called women's temperance activism in the late 19th century "The Maternal Struggle." Women interpreted the temperance movement, Bordin argued, as an imperative to "protect the home."⁶¹ Brocker described the agency afforded to women through the Adair Law was one of its "maker's" unintended outcomes but that it presented something of a double-edged sword. Reformers delighted in the opportunity to provide legal recognition of the women's plight but, as a result of extended court actions and relatively minor fines, the law frequently failed to provide appropriate legal remedies. It left women frustrated in their attempts to "protect" their homes from the damage caused by intemperate spouses.⁶²

An examination of the Adair Law actions offers further evidence of the agency a wife might acquire both within her family and in the larger community. Reporting on the November 1872 case of Margaret Collins versus two Queen City saloonkeepers, John Oberley and his wife, the *Cincinnati Enquirer* labeled the law “one of the greatest woman’s rights bills which ever had been passed.” Despite testifying that they had refused Collins a drink without “written permission” from his wife, the court found in favor of the plaintiffs and fined the Oberleys fifty dollars. “This behooves all the men in Cincinnati who want to drink safely to get a written permission from their wives,” the *Enquirer* commented, “Otherwise they will stand a strong chance of being refused, after a result of this case.”⁶³

Opponents of the Adair Liquor Law criticized the lack of safeguards aimed at preventing the act from opening the door to a “most detestable system for blackmailing saloon-keepers.” Claiming that “respectable wives” will never seek redress via the courts for the actions of the injuries incurred by a drunken husband, a special correspondent to the *Cincinnati Enquirer* wrote: “Nine times out of ten . . . the husband of the wife who sues is too lazy to work. To get money he conspires with his wife to get up a case that will put money in their pocket.”⁶⁴ In the vast majority of Adair Law cases, juries assigned damages in the range of \$50 to \$100, not insubstantial sums in the early 1870s, but not, in most cases, crippling to the proprietor. However, the expense of a jury trial and the consequent negative publicity, encouraged saloonkeepers to settle out of court with unscrupulous couples who threatened legal action. The *Enquirer* suggested that “the saloon-keeper would far rather pay \$10, the price usually asked by the woman whose husband goes to the grog shop with her consent to get liquor and while drinking is caught by the wife, who then threatens suit unless the hush-money is paid.” “No man

is safe in their hands,” the paper lamented, “and in this manner the baser class of men and women obtain money by false pretenses.”⁶⁵

The pattern of civil action also caused concerns for anti-temperance advocates. The *Volksfreund* reported that a temperance man, R. H. Hawkins, had “prudently selected for their victim a man carrying on a small business in an out of the way place and possessing comparatively little influence and means of resistance.” The paper’s editors described the possibility of civil complaint under the law as hanging “like the sword of Damocles over the heads of those who may possibly come into collision with it.”⁶⁶ On January 1, 1875, the *Circleville (OH) Democrat and Watchman* reprinted a *Toledo Democrat and Herald* editorial, that argued, “What the people do want . . . is a modification of the Adair Law . . . the law is now an invitation to fraud and blackmailing, enabling as it does worthless parties to conspire to obtain money from responsible parties for injuries never done.”⁶⁷ Anti-temperance advocates sought to remedy these deficiencies by petitioning the legislature and the courts and by fighting a defensive battle in the 1873-1874 Ohio State Constitutional Convention.

The 1872 Ohio General Assembly contained a decided Republican majority of 57 Republicans to 48 Democrats in the House of Representatives. The State Senate, on the other hand, was deadlocked with 18 Democrats and 18 Republicans.⁶⁸ Jacob Mueller, the Republican lieutenant governor, a native of Bavaria who arrived in the United States as a refugee of the Revolutions of 1848, would, according to the rules of the Ohio Senate, cast the deciding vote in the event of a deadlocked chamber.⁶⁹

Legislators who opposed the Adair Law entered the session with the expectation of either repealing the law outright or amending the statute to offer better protections for saloonkeepers and landlords. House Democrats hoped to pull Republican representatives elected from urban

areas with significant immigrant populations over to their side, a strategy supported by the editors of the *Volksblatt*, who claimed that the “only anti-temperance elements of the Republican party are from the larger cities.”⁷⁰ Democratic anti-Adair senators rested secure in their knowledge that, even if they were unable to bring any Republicans to their side in the vote, the German-American Mueller, who was “eloquent in denunciation of the so-called Adair Liquor Law,” could be counted on to support their cause in the Senate.⁷¹

Despite a petition signed by 47,000 Queen City residents demanding amendments to the law, efforts to bring an action to the House floor came to no avail.⁷² In the House, Henry Berkstresser, a Lawrence County (Ironton) Methodist minister and a committed prohibitionist, chaired the Temperance Committee “filled with ultra-Temperance men, including hot-gospelers,” so it was no surprise to observers that legislation to amend or repeal the Adair Law failed to see the light of day.⁷³

Under the rules of the Ohio State Senate, Mueller, as president, held the power of committee appointments. In spite of his anti-Adair rhetoric, and his promises to place senators who favored amending the law on the committee, he appointed a “fanatic Committee on Temperance” who kept the bill from ever reaching the floor of the Senate for a vote. Writing from Columbus, “Carl,” in a letter to the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, recounted that “some of Mueller’s Cincinnati friends, who happened to be brewers” took the “recreant to task for his violated promises.” “Gravely and solemnly,” Carl recalled, “he [Mueller] asserted that he thought he had appointed an anti-temperance committee, and he was deceived by the men,” an explanation that no doubt strained the credulity of his listeners.⁷⁴ For his part, in the 1872 election Mueller managed to eke out only a meager 125 vote win out of 3,729 votes cast in Cincinnati’s German-American wards over his Democratic opponent. Mueller may have calculated he might realize

greater political returns within the Republican party by siding with the prohibitionists. Mueller served only one term as Lieutenant Governor, but was elected as a representative from Cuyahoga County (Cleveland) to the Ohio State Constitutional Convention in 1873.⁷⁵

Mueller warned his fellow Republicans in the spring 1872 that Grant's defeat in the fall elections seemed likely unless they "get rid of the odium Temperance – the Germans will all go over to the Democrats."⁷⁶ Thanks in large part to the weakness of Horace Greeley as the Democratic candidate, Grant's defeat never came to pass. German-Americans greeted Greeley's candidacy with deep suspicions because of his strong views supporting temperance. The president of the USBA warned that Greeley's "antecedents will warrant him a pliable tool in the hands of the temperance party." Urging his fellow brewers to rebuke Greeley's commitment to temperance, he declared, "although I have belonged to the Democratic Party ever since I had the vote, I would sooner vote for the Republican ticket than cast my ballot for such a candidate."⁷⁷

The Republican's reckoning came to pass in Ohio in 1873. While the Democratic gubernatorial candidate William Allen defeated the incumbent Republican Edward Noyes by only 817 votes out of nearly 500,000 cast, the balance of power in the Ohio General Assembly shifted markedly. In the State Senate, twenty-two Democrats held a decided advantage over fourteen Republicans, a shift of four seats from the previous legislature. The House witnessed an even larger shift, putting the Democrats in the majority with fifty-six seats compared to just forty-six Republican seats, with three Independents filling the void. Calling the Democratic majority "a fine opportunity for the Democratic Party to prove that it is indeed a friend of personal freedom," the editor of the *Volksfreund* made the top legislative priority clear. "We expect first of all," he wrote on October 21, "therefore, that the next legislature will repeal the odious and unjust Adair Liquor Law."⁷⁸

The 1873 – 1874 legislative session recorded the introduction of two anti-temperance bills. One, to repeal the Adair Law in full, failed to gain any traction. The second, the so-called Geghan Amendment, required that a plaintiff’s accusation must be accompanied by a witness statement and be filed with the town clerk’s office giving ten days of notice to saloons and drug stores to refrain from selling intoxicating drinks to a “drunkard.” That bill offered a safe harbor to saloon keepers as well. If, within the ten-day notice period, a saloon keeper refused to sell alcohol to someone labeled an “habitual drunkard,” no action under the Adair Law would be possible. The editors of the *Volksfreund* observed “. . . a saloon keeper also has no right to complain if the law punishes him for selling liquors to notorious drunkards . . . but there is a great difference between such wise restrictions and the infamous conditions of the Adair Law, which opens the door to every possible vexation of saloon-keepers and property-owners.”⁷⁹

The amendment came to a vote on March 26, 1874, and, much to the disappointment of the anti-temperance forces, failed by a vote in the House by a margin of 47 nays and 39 yeas, despite the substantial Democratic majority.⁸⁰ Only three Republicans supported the amendment, while fifteen Democrats sided with Adair Law supporters. Citing the robust temperance activity in the Buckeye State that spring, an editorial in the *Commercial* noted, “The failure of the amendment is unquestionably due to the quickening of public sentiment by the women of Ohio.”⁸¹ Over the winter and spring 1874 nearly 32,000 women engaged in public protest of the liquor trade as a part of a spontaneous protest movement. The movement was most successful in Ohio’s rural counties and Democratic legislators representing those districts wavered in the face of the public’s seemingly enthusiastic response to the women.

In its 1875 session, amid a far calmer environment, the General Assembly successfully adopted the Reese Bill in February to amend the Adair Liquor Law. The new measure, like the

Geghan amendment considered the previous year, required that a spouse's complaint be accompanied by a witness statement. Saloonkeepers were given ten days' notice to respond following a complaint filed with the town clerk's office, and the clerk was required to keep the filings open to public inspection. All three provisions dampened enthusiasm for future civil damage actions – wives of habitual drunkards frequently proved unwilling to make such a public accusation and feared reprisal from their spouses once such filings became known.

The General Assembly was not the only battlefield where the Adair Liquor Law was contested: Ohio's courts also provided a lively venue. R. M. Hawkins, a member of the Hamilton County Temperance Society, filed the first case in the Queen City against George Lambert and John Mason for selling "intoxicating liquor to be drank on the premises."⁸² Police Court Judge Carter found for the plaintiff, but noted that "if he could have his way he would not commence by prosecuting remote and obscure saloons at the outskirts of the city, but would rather devote his attentions to the gin palaces on our public streets."⁸³ Uneven application of the Adair Law became most apparent in the divide between urban and rural jurisdictions. After noting that the injustices suffered as a result of the Adair Law were relatively scarce in large cities, the editors of *Volksfreund* complained: "But in the country it is much worse. There the Germans especially suffer who have their saloons in the midst of cold-water fanatics."⁸⁴

The legal battle over the Adair Law also extended beyond the courtroom into the ballot box. The question of the constitutionality of the Adair Liquor Law proved to be the defining point of contention in the 1872 race for a seat on Ohio's Supreme Court. In December 1871, C. John Welch, a Republican incumbent justice, reversed a lower court ruling and wrote an opinion that held both saloonkeepers and their landlords liable for not just current and past damages, but also for future losses that might be incurred because of a habitual drunkard's past actions.⁸⁵ The

Volksblatt's editors charged that Welch's ruling "renders the Adair Law tyrannical enough in itself, still more stringent and oppressive." The same editorial proclaimed Welch's Democratic opponent, John L. Green, "a man of honor and liberal sentiment."⁸⁶

The two candidates' respective positions on the question of the Adair Law had a significant impact on the support each candidate drew in the Queen City's German-American wards. Green defeated Welch in Hamilton County (Cincinnati) by 8,875 votes out of nearly 41,500 votes cast. Welch ran significantly behind the rest of the Republican ticket – the Republican candidate for secretary of state polled over 3,000 votes better than Welch in the county.⁸⁷

While Green ultimately lost the statewide contest to Welch, he nonetheless remained on the Common Pleas Court and wrote a decision in February 1873 effectively ruling the Adair Law unconstitutional. Green found, in *Granger versus Joseph Knipper, et al*, that because the sales of liquor were "made in the usual and lawful course of trade, or given for any purpose, not forbidden by law; the said clause is an assumption of authority not conferred by the constitution." In a second part of his conclusion, Green required that proof must be offered that "the injury of which the plaintiff complains was a direct result of an act of a person at the time intoxicated."⁸⁸ Temperance reformers inferred the financial support Green received from "the saloon-keepers and manufacturers of intoxicating liquors" in his race for the Ohio Supreme Court influenced his ruling.⁸⁹ However, the Superior Court of Ohio heard Granger's appeal in its April 1873 term and sustained Green's ruling, raising the burden of proof for future plaintiffs in pursuit of an Adair Law action.⁹⁰

William Adair chose not to stand for re-election to the Ohio General Assembly in 1873, opting instead to pursue election as Carroll County's delegate to the state's Constitutional

Convention. Adair joined a fraternity of sixty-two lawyers among the 105 delegates, leading observers at the time to dub the proceedings “the lawyers convention.”⁹¹ Delegates to the Convention first convened on May 13, 1873, and completed their work nearly a year to the day later on May 15, 1874, meeting for a total of 188 days, and dividing their work between Columbus, Cleveland and Cincinnati.⁹² The political affiliation of the delegates reflected the political divides that existed at the time in Ohio – fifty Republicans, forty-five Democrats, five Liberal Republicans, four Independents, and one Labor Reform party member.⁹³ Most likely the Liberal Republicans, given the strong German-American support the party enjoyed, sided with the Democrats on the alcohol question. Temperance, along with an overhaul of Ohio’s court system and tax reform, occupied most of the convention’s time and involved some of its most contentious debates.

Adair introduced Proposition 215 on April 23, 1874, a measure intended to enshrine the provisions of the Adair Liquor Law into the Ohio State Constitution.⁹⁴ While this proposal never received serious consideration, the future of the Adair Law remained very much on the minds of Convention delegates. The *Enquirer*’s editors proclaimed: “The question has no business in the Constitution. It is a subject for legislation.”⁹⁵

The days and hours that delegates spent debating the “liquor question” boiled down to two key questions: 1) Should the new constitution provide for a license system or simply outright ban the sale and manufacture of intoxicating beverages altogether, and 2) To what extent should future legislatures have the freedom to regulate or restrain the liquor traffic? Temperance advocates distrusted the actions of future legislatures and sought to place constitutional constraints on the sale and manufacture of beer, wines, and liquor. Adair argued in an April 1874 speech to the Convention that he “knew enough about the workings of that body to be

aware of the uncertainty of matters that appear certain.”⁹⁶ Speaking against the adoption of a constitutional provision allowing for a state licensing system for the sale of alcohol, William H. West, former state supreme court justice and delegate from Logan County, argued: “. . . the very moment you adopt the proposition . . . that moment the Adair liquor law is wiped out of existence.”⁹⁷

Delegates to the 1873 – 1874 Constitutional Convention struggled to answer the question that the 1851 Constitutional Convention left open, making the question of the “ever-disturbing liquor problem” one of the central debates twenty-three years later. Barnabas Burns, a delegate from Richland County (Mansfield), declared: “There is, perhaps, no question which agitates the public mind, or divides the people of the State, upon which the parties thus divided are so illiberal and so uncharitable to each other as upon this question.” Auglaize County (Wapakoneta) delegate W. V. M. Layton observed that the temperance issue ranked with the public sentiment reminiscent of the succession crisis a decade and a half earlier noting, “The feeling has risen to such a pitch . . . It has arrayed neighbor against neighbor, brother against brother, father against son, and son against father, and last, though not the least, husband against wife and wife against husband.”⁹⁸ Over the course of entire convention, nearly every session began with the presentation of anti-license and pro-license petitions by “a dozen or more” delegates on behalf of their constituents. The *Enquirer’s* editors suggested that the best thing the Convention should do would be “to pile them up in two piles, one for prohibition and the other for license, and then weigh them avoirdupois and make out their report in accordance with the heaviest. So far I doubt there would be a pound of difference.”⁹⁹

Delegates who argued for the license provision in the constitution called upon their colleagues to recognize the different cultural and political experiences of German-Americans to

support their arguments. The Summit County (Akron) delegate, Alvin Voris, reminded delegates that “Our foreign populations are not fully with us in many of our notions and practices. I am not prepared to ostracize my German friend because he insists on his traditional drink of beer . . . He was not educated in the school of the Puritan.”¹⁰⁰ Julius Frieberg, a native of Bavaria and a delegate from Hamilton County, rose in defense of license to “offer a few words in the interest of individual liberty.” Frieberg asserted that the “temperance crusade derives its principal support from the Protestant Church which tries its utmost to gain a strong foothold on the Ship of the State. May heaven forbid that such may ever come to pass”¹⁰¹

Delegates who opposed licensing frequently referred to the disreputable nature of “rum shops” and other low “doggeries” where alcohol was sold. A license system, they feared, would give legitimacy to saloons and beer gardens and do nothing to prevent the proliferation of vendors of beer and liquor. Citing the number of saloons in Cincinnati as an example, pro-license delegates countered that argument by asserting that a license system would dramatically reduce the number of sellers of alcohol from as many as 3,000 to fewer than 300. Jacob Mueller, the former lieutenant governor, whose pro-temperance appointments to the Senate Temperance Committee left Cincinnati’s brewery owners so confounded, addressed the delegates to the convention in support of the licensing system by recalling his experiences in Germany: “I cannot perceive why we should not in this respect approach the state of affairs as in the old country where places of public resort are kept by the best class of citizens, and where it has never entered the head of any sensible man that such places were destructive to morality and sobriety.”¹⁰²

Stewart recalled that in April 1874, the “liquor men were bringing all of their money and political influence to bear upon the delegates” to support the licensing provision in the constitution.¹⁰³ Moreover, temperance supporters, observing the delegates’ after-hours libations

in the Queen City's restaurants, hotels, and saloons, grew wary of the delegates' personal commitment to the cause. (Like Adair, members' personal habits were not always congruent with their political positions.) Joseph M. Root, the delegate from Erie County (Sandusky) declared: "You are denouncing the things that you do yourselves." He moved on to warn his colleagues: "The fact is, the private as well as the public characters of the champions of prohibition will be drawn in the question of whiskey politics."¹⁰⁴

To counter these concerns, as the convention drew to its late spring conclusion, anti-license forces representing 141 temperance leagues from seventy-three Ohio counties convened in Cincinnati on April 22, 1874, to make plain their views on the constitutional question.¹⁰⁵ The following day delegates heard a memorial from the temperance convention, urging first, that "no license in intoxicating liquors shall be granted within this State" and, second, directing the General Assembly, "at its first session under this Constitution, shall enact laws to prevent the evils . . . from the sale or furnishing of intoxicating beverages."¹⁰⁶

Unable to reach a consensus on the constitutional question on licensing, delegates opted instead to offer two simple options for voters to consider in combination with the August 1874 referendum on the new constitution: "License to traffic in intoxicating liquors, yes" or, conversely, "License to traffic in intoxicating liquors, no."¹⁰⁷ An affirmative vote "granted" the General Assembly the capacity to establish the ground rules for and to regulate a license system. A negative vote prohibited future legislatures from granting licenses for the sale of intoxicating liquors and gave legislators the mandate to "restrain or prohibit such traffic."¹⁰⁸ The question before the voters was not whether or not the state could intervene in the traffic of liquor sales, but rather should its intervention make access to intoxicating beverages easy or difficult?¹⁰⁹

The convention added a further condition to the licensing question by providing for the winning proposition to automatically amend the current constitution in the event the newly crafted proposal failed at the polls. Fearing the strength of the anti-license vote, temperance activists became so alarmed by this provision that they urged voters to reject both the revised constitution and the licensing proposal.¹¹⁰ Buckeye State voters went to the polls August 18, 1874, where the proposed constitution suffered an overwhelming defeat by the margin of 250,169 to 102,885.¹¹¹ Despite the constitution's landslide defeat, the licensing proposal nevertheless came very close to succeeding, receiving 49 percent of the vote.¹¹² The editors of the *Enquirer* noted: "The preachers and the ultra-church interest voted on Tuesday last with the keepers of the lowest doggeries and brothels. It was a beautiful union of elements, but it well illustrated the character of the opposition to license."¹¹³ Politics does, indeed, make strange bedfellows.

Hamilton County voters approved the licensing system by a wide margin – 14,829 to 3,925. The vote margins in the city's four German-American wards left no question on the ground that constituency stood, as well as its capacity to stand together on against threats to their personal liberty. Regarding licensing, the German-Americans were emphatic: 3,692 voters favored the license proposal; the anti-license proposal received 384 votes.¹¹⁴ That said, voter turnout in Cincinnati's German wards dropped off sharply in the months between the gubernatorial contest of October 1873 and the constitutional referendum. German-Americans cast a total of 6,137 ballots in the 1873 election compared to 4,076 total votes in the constitutional referendum just nine months later. Had German-Americans turned out at the same rate in Cincinnati and across the state as they had in the earlier gubernatorial balloting, the licensing measure would likely have been adopted.

Despite its origins as “only a local bill” framed as a means of settling accounts in a provincial political dispute, by a politician who did not entertain strong personal temperance views, and adopted by a General Assembly that, according to contemporary observers, failed to understand its implications, the Adair Liquor Law imposed a lasting impact on the temperance debate in the United States.¹¹⁵ Prior to civil damage actions undertaken under the Adair Law, women enjoyed neither agency nor much voice in the temperance cause, acting in most instances as an auxiliary to male-dominated temperance societies. Adair, wittingly or unwittingly, changed that dynamic by providing an official venue – the justice system – for the wives, sisters, and mothers of habitual drunkards to appear in a court of law and testify to the extent that drink had ravaged their families. Stewart recalled her testimony in the 1872 Adair Law case in Springfield as “the unheard-of occurrence of a woman pleading a case in court.”¹¹⁶ Writing in 1890, she recalled her prosecution of a liquor seller on behalf of the wife of a habitual drunkard in a court of law, “as my first step in the Crusade.”¹¹⁷

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Chapter Four

The Limits of Moral Suasion

A short one-paragraph article buried on page four of the January 2, 1874, *Cincinnati Enquirer* heralded the launch of the Women's Temperance Crusade (WTC) in Ohio. The *Enquirer* reported that the "good women" of Washington Court House, Ohio, "commenced some days ago upon the liquor sellers by calling in a body upon them and turning their sinks of iniquity into houses of prayer."¹ Over the course of the next five months an estimated 32,000 women in Ohio joined the "good women" of Washington Court House in a series of actions aimed at convincing druggists and saloonkeepers in 307 communities across the state to forego all commerce in beer, wine, and liquors.² The Women's Temperance Crusade dominated the front pages of the *Enquirer* and newspapers across the state through the first half of 1874. The temperance movement's early successes in small towns across Ohio threatened the festive culture of the vibrant German-American community in Cincinnati and the vitality of the burgeoning, predominantly German-owned brewing industry. The women who formed the WTC in Ohio established the momentum that carried the movement into thirty-two states and territories and involved over 54,000 women in a nationwide movement of moral suasion to shut down sales of beer, wine, and liquor.³ The WTC of 1873–1874 formed the foundation of the prohibition movement, a reform effort that dominated local, state, and national politics across the United States for the next half-century.

By late 1873, the political environment in Ohio was ripe for temperance reformers thanks to the constant legislative threats to the Adair Liquor Law and the uncertainty created by deep divisions within the Ohio Constitutional Convention on the licensing question. Additionally, in

the eyes of the reformers, a powerful liquor lobby combined with a coalition of brewers kept close control of the state's political leadership, effectively blocking any substantive reform. The government's dependence on the tax revenue generated by the sale of alcohol, and the difficulty in enforcing restrictions to the access to drink, made clear that local, state or federal jurisdictions were either incapable or unwilling to prohibit the sale of alcohol. Meanwhile, reformers feared the wave of working-class Europeans—Germans, predominantly—who filled immigrant neighborhoods in Ohio's urban areas. German immigrants densely populated Cincinnati's Over-The-Rhine district, a cluster of neighborhoods just north of the Miami Canal. The region was largely defined by the number of the area's saloons filled, even on Sundays, with beer-drinking German-Americans.

On December 23, 1873, an unlikely figure stepped into this volatile environment to spark the WTC. Dioclesian (Dio) Lewis, M. D., M. A, a Boston-based homeopathic physician, inventor, educator, and devoted teetotaler, was a regular speaker on the period's Lyceum lecture circuit. According to his biographer, Lewis' principal speaking fees derived from his lectures arguing for the empowerment of women and girls through physical education. An article in the Bangor, Maine, *Whig* on May 11, 1874, described Lewis as having a quiet speaking style with "no outbursts of enthusiasm but with an impressiveness of manner and speech that thrills the audience."⁴ In their 1874 annual report, the editors of the United States Brewers Association (USBA), an organization whose membership had little sympathy for the women's temperance reform movement, called Lewis, "a sincere and good man, unusually gifted and with many engaging qualities."⁵ When he took the stage in Hillsboro, Ohio's, Music Hall on the evening of December 23, 1873, to speak "On the Potency of the Prayers of Women in Grog Shops," he followed his long-established practice of delivering temperance lectures free of charge on

Sunday evenings.⁶ Lewis estimated that he delivered the same speech more than 300 times over the previous twenty years.⁷

Lewis' story drew heavily upon the memories of his "mother and several of her good Christian friends uniting in prayer with and for the liquor-sellers of his native town until they gave up their soul-destroying business."⁸ While his childhood memory of his mother provided his inspiration, the moral grounding of his lecture stemmed from the teachings of Lyman Beecher nearly a half century earlier. Beecher, a New England Presbyterian minister, co-founder of the American Temperance Society, president of Cincinnati's Lane College from 1832 to 1853, and father of Henry Ward Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, rose to prominence as one of the leaders of the New School Presbyterianism that emerged in the 1820s in the midst of the Second Great Awakening. Beecher and his fellow post-millennialists' version of American Puritanism animated the great reform movements of the nineteenth century – abolitionism, women's suffrage, and temperance. The post-millennial imperative for homogeneity in American life largely muted the progressive nature of the emerging theology, giving rise to the growing sense of nativism in antebellum America. In his anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant screed, *A Plea for the West* (1835), Beecher proclaimed that "this danger from uneducated minds is augmenting daily by the rapid influx of foreign emigrants, the greater part unacquainted with our institutions, unaccustomed to self-government, inaccessible to education, and easily accessible to prepossession, and inveterate credulity, and intrigue, and easily embodied and wielded by sinister design."⁹ By the 1870s, the various nineteenth-century temperance movements and nativism had existed side-by-side for nearly a half a century. German-Americans, especially those residing in Cincinnati, as veterans of the Know-Nothing era, understood all too well the language of nativists and the threat their sentiments presented to German culture and heritage.

In 1826 Beecher published *Six Sermons on Intemperance*, a work that proclaimed the roots of intemperance – the thirst of the intemperate and the commerce in alcohol – could be eradicated only through moral influence. Beecher’s influential tract remained in print for over five decades; the *National Temperance Advocate* advertised copies for sale for twenty-five cents as late as May 1867.¹⁰ The minister observed in the fourth sermon that “Magistrates will not, and cannot, if they would, execute the laws against the unlawful drinking and vending of unlawful spirits”¹¹ In his fifth sermon, recognizing that legislative action by itself could never cure an intemperate nation, Beecher urged voluntary action “within your own neighborhood.”¹² He preached “no extended, well-directed application of moral influence, was ever made in vain.”¹³ The prayer bands Lewis’ mother led answered Lyman Beecher’s call to employ moral suasion as a means to rid Lewis’ hometown of Clarksville, New York, of whiskey sellers, saloons, and the intemperate.

Lewis recounted in the foreword to J. H. Beadle’s *The Women’s War On Whiskey: Its History, Theory and Prospects* (1874) that, over the preceding two decades, he narrated his mother’s story in hundreds of lectures. “In about twenty towns the plan had been tried,” he recalled, “and in each of those places I presented the scheme precisely as in Southern Ohio and know of no reason why the Grand March did not begin before the last week of the year in 1873.”¹⁴ At the conclusion of his December 23 lecture in Hillsboro, Lewis called upon the women of the town to follow his mother’s example and apply, through prayer and protest, their moral suasion upon the sellers of beer and liquors. Lewis asked, as he had done three hundred times earlier: “Ladies, you might do the same thing in Hillsboro, if you had the same faith Suppose I ask the women of this audience to signify their opinions on this subject?”¹⁵ Fifty hands shot up into the air.¹⁶ The next morning, following an organizational meeting in the Hillsboro

Presbyterian Church, “seventy women arrayed in sable black,” marched into the streets of Hillsboro, Ohio. This entourage marked the launch of the Women’s Temperance Crusade.¹⁷

In their first organizational meeting on December 24, 1873, Hillsboro’s reformers elected Mrs. Eliza Trimble Thompson, the daughter of William E. Trimble, Ohio’s first temperance governor, and cousin of the Reverend George Beecher, one of Lyman Beecher’s grandsons, to lead their effort.¹⁸ After ordering the Crusaders to “let us file out, two by two, the smallest first.” Thompson, in what foreshadowed much of what lay ahead in the Women’s Temperance Crusade, made the first stop at a saloon only identified as “John’s.”¹⁹ Thompson hoped that John, a German immigrant, and the brother of a servant in the Thompson home for thirteen years, might prove compliant to the Crusaders’ entreaties to abandon his saloon.²⁰ Comprised of the wives of Hillsboro’s most prominent citizens—lawyers, ministers, bankers—Thompson’s prayer band enjoyed a decidedly upper hand in the conflict against the solitary saloonkeeper. John, however, was made of stern stuff. After some time spent listening to prayers and hymns, John exclaimed, “It’s awful; it’s a sin and a shame to pray in a saloon!” He then refused to sign the temperance pledge.²¹

Rethinking their strategy in the face of John’s intransigence, the reformers approached the town’s four druggists. Three of them immediately signed the “druggist’s pledge” while a fourth, William Dunn, refused.²² After weeks of dealing with prayer bands disrupting his business, Dunn sued the Crusaders in February 1874 for \$10,000 in damages.²³ The suit eventually reached the Ohio Supreme Court and long outlived the WTC, ending in Dunn’s bankruptcy.²⁴

Thompson recalled in *Hillsboro Crusade Sketches and Family Records* (1895) that, as the line of seventy women made their way to “John’s saloon,” Dio Lewis passed by them on his way

to Washington Court House, a small Ohio town thirty-five miles northeast of Hillsboro where, on Christmas Day, Lewis addressed an audience both aware of what transpired in Hillsboro and eager to emulate the action of the women in their neighboring town.²⁵ Anne Wittenmeyer, the first president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), the nationwide temperance organization formed in 1874 in the wake of the Crusade, conceded that while the Crusade began in Hillsboro, "Washington Court House was the first place the Crusade was made prominent and successful."²⁶ The speed with which the Washington Court House Crusade overwhelmed the town's fourteen sites where "intoxicating drinks were sold" became a major factor in the notoriety that Washington Court House achieved among temperance and anti-temperance forces alike—all eleven saloons and three drugstores had either signed the pledge never to sell alcoholic beverages or had shuttered their businesses within one week of the Crusade's December 26 inception.²⁷

The decision by the *Cincinnati Commercial* to send a reporter, J. H. Beadle, to report on the Crusade proved to be an equally important factor in Washington Court House's rise to prominence. A supporter of the reformers' cause, Beadle cast journalistic objectivity to the wind and filled the *Cincinnati Commercial* with enthusiastic reports of the Crusade's progress across southern Ohio. The *Fayette County Herald*, the local Washington Court House newspaper, later congratulated the *Commercial* for its "enterprise" in sending "Mr. Beadle" to report on the Crusade's progress, and noted, "his reports are fine, spicy, and will have a good effect on the country."²⁸

Beadle arrived in Washington Court House on January 20, 1874, more than three weeks after the Crusade commenced and long after the reformers' victory within the city limits.²⁹ By that time, the Crusaders extended their efforts to confront beer and liquor dealers outside of

Washington Court House and focused their attention on Karl Beck's beer garden, located about one-half mile beyond the town's boundaries. Beadle offered an extraordinarily picturesque narrative of the confrontation between Beck, a German immigrant, and the Crusaders, "On one side a score of elegant ladies, singing with all the earnestness of impassioned natures; a few yards away, a knot of disturbed revelers, uncertain whether to stand or fly; half-way between, the nervous Beck, bobbing around like a case of fiddle-strings with a hundred pounds of lager-beer fat hung on them, and on the fence by the ladies a cold-blooded lawyer and excited reporter scribbling away as if their lives depended on it. It was painful from its very intensity."³⁰ The confrontation in Beck's beer garden formed a familiar scene, as recounted by memoirists and newspaper reports of the Crusader activity, witnessed in thousands of saloons in towns all across Ohio.

Beadle's account of the events at Beck's beer garden appeared in the *Cincinnati Commercial* on January 23, 1874, and clearly established Beck's status as a German immigrant. Beadle characterized Beck's speech as "High Dutch" and "low English," quoting him in dialect.³¹ After Beck refused to allow the women entrance into his establishment, the temperance men in Washington Court House built a "tabernacle" directly opposite the Chilicothe Pike from Beck's establishment.³² Beck said, as reported by Beadle, "Py shinks dey build a house right in the street, and stay mit a man all day a singin' and oder foolishness."³³ Memoirists and newspaper reporters commonly used dialect as a device to set German immigrants apart from native-born citizens.

After successfully obtaining an injunction against the Crusaders' interference with his business, Beck forwarded a dispatch to the *Cincinnati Commercial*: "Tell Beadle . . . that my "gounsel" has had the "demperance" meeting and tabernacle abated as a nuisance."³⁴ Eventually,

however, Beck relented to the reformers' demands and signed "a pledge never to sell liquor again in Washington."³⁵ Beck's assent, like many such pledges signed by saloonkeepers during the Crusade movement, signified more a matter of convenience than a commitment to reform. The 1880 Federal Census found Charles Beck, aged fifty-seven, a native of Württemberg, Germany, in Washington Court House living with his wife Dora and teenaged son. His occupation appeared as "saloonkeeper."³⁶

The action at Beck's beer garden also served as an example of the successes of the reform movement in small towns across Ohio. The court-ordered injunction against the Crusaders' interference with the operation of his beer garden protected Beck's rights. Why did he, at least temporarily, yield his rights and sign the temperance pledge? The answer lies partly in the contrast between the Crusaders' social and economic power and the saloonkeepers' and druggists' collective social and economic capital.

Wittenmyer described the Crusaders in Georgetown, Ohio, as "the very best of female inhabitants. They are the wives and daughters of ministers, bankers, judges, lawyers, merchants and mechanics of the place."³⁷ Lewis' biographer, Mary Eastman's description of the Xenia, Ohio, Crusade noted "there was not a woman of any social position in Xenia who was not identified with the movement."³⁸ Historian Jack S. Blocker argued that the Crusade signified a "mass movement of the women of local elites."³⁹ He revealed that Crusader families comprised 13.7 percent of the population in Washington Court House, yet they owned slightly more than 50 percent of all of the community's wealth.⁴⁰ Blocker's findings, along with historian Charles A. Isetts' 1979 analysis of the women who participated in Hillsboro Crusade, suggest that in small town Ohio economic and social persuasion played as large a role as moral suasion in the Crusade's success.⁴¹

The reform movement in Ohio achieved a viral status after the success of the Washington Court House Crusade. Frances Willard, the future, long-time WCTU president, likened it to “a wildfire over the land, breaking out here, there and everywhere without known concert of action.”⁴² Between January 3, 1874, and the first week in March 1874, thirty-eight towns across Ohio organized Crusades.⁴³ The reasons for the reform movement’s rapid growth are varied and complex. Historian Jed Dannebaum argued that WTC signified the climax of a reform movement that stretched back to the earliest days of temperance activity.⁴⁴ His narrative began with the “Martha Washingtonians,” a sorority of female temperance activists, formed alongside the relatively peaceful Washingtonian reform movement of male temperance advocates of the 1840s. But the women’s temperance movement grew more militant over time, culminating in the series of violent “saloon-wrecking” episodes that occurred in the mid-1850s. Dannebaum charted the active role and growing militancy among women along the various stages of the reform movement in the antebellum era. His analysis parallels neatly with Hillsboro’s Eliza Thompson’s growing activism; she recalled her attendance as the “first woman to enter the National Temperance Convention” nearly four decades earlier, in 1836, as a twenty-year-old on the arm of her father. Thompson’s long temperance career made her one of the WCTU’s most revered “mothers,” until her death in 1905.⁴⁵

Dannebaum’s study helped to explain the origins of the Crusade, but fails to account for its rapid growth. Presbyterian and Methodist ministers were some of the primary institutional agents who assisted in the spread of the Crusaders’ message and methodology. Typically, the local Presbyterian or Methodist churches launched and sponsored crusade activity in a given town. Crusades opened with the minister of the local church offering prayers, followed by an exhortation by a second member of the local clergy, and then an organizational meeting by the

women in attendance. A multi-denominational network of clergy committed to the temperance cause proved to be an effective channel to encourage the spread of the movement.

The Crusaders themselves were active agents as well. As early as February 5, 1874, less than six weeks after commencing reform activity, Hillsboro's Crusaders created and distributed an instruction guide for organizing a crusade to five hundred churches, including at least one in each Ohio county seat.⁴⁶ The January 22, 1874, *Fayette County Herald* reported that the Washington Court House Temperance League had appointed twenty-two mission teams typically consisting of one man – many of whom were ministers – along with two or three Crusaders to hold meetings “throughout the county,” who then submitted reports on the proceedings.⁴⁷ Reform advocates found a welcoming environment and receptive audiences thanks to the positive reporting of the Crusades' progress by both local newspapers and the Cincinnati dailies. This ensured significant reach throughout southern Ohio.

The first WTC convention convened on February 24, 1874, and provided the final impetus for the spread of the reform movement in Ohio. The convention, according to one of its organizers, Eliza C. “Mother” Stewart, brought together 1,200 persons from around the state in an attempt to create a sustainable, statewide organization.⁴⁸ The convention delegates elected Dio Lewis as chairman of the proceedings and named Stewart both a vice president and the chair of the Committee on Resolutions.⁴⁹ More pep rally than convention, it generated only a resolution that stated in part, “the success of the Ohio women's movement in behalf of the temperance reform has given substantial assurance that traffic in and use of intoxicating drinks can and will be removed from the State and Nation.”⁵⁰ Nonetheless, Blocker's analysis found that, thus inspired by the convention's fervid atmosphere, Crusaders established 105 new Crusades within nineteen days of the close of the February 24 proceedings.⁵¹

Memoirists of the Crusades and the sympathetic press unfailingly described the Crusaders as spiritual, angelic women whose courageous and earnest pleadings with saloonkeepers turned even the hardest mind their way. To buttress this image of spirituality, accounts of the Crusade by both reformers and reporters were filled with dubious references to “drunkards” who, upon passing the crusading women on the street, found themselves so overcome by the women’s prayers, hymns, and pleas, that they burst into tears at the sight of their spirituality. No doubt it took a significant amount of moral, if not physical, courage for upper-middle class Christian women to enter saloons named “Dead Fall” or “Den of Iniquity,” but they seldom approached these saloons or their proprietors unaccompanied by husbands and other male temperance supporters. Not unexpectedly, the prayer bands drew large crowds to view the confrontation between the women and the saloonkeepers. Husbands, fathers, and other male supporters of the temperance movement densely populated the surrounding crowds and helped to ensure the protection of the Crusaders. If the reformers found themselves locked out of a particular saloon, they often called their male supporters for a tabernacle—a rough building—to be constructed nearby to protect the women from the snow and the cold as they prayed and sang. The almost constant presence of male temperance supporters made it clear to saloonkeepers that leading clergy, businessmen, and others supported the Crusaders’ objectives.

Some Crusaders, such as Mother Stewart, aligned themselves with the women’s suffrage movement. Stewart, however, feared that the divisiveness of the suffrage issue might damage the reformers’ cause.⁵² Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton normally welcomed any movement comprised of women, but both women expressed deep reservations about the futility of the reformers’ efforts. Anthony called the WTC a “desecration of womanhood and of the religious element in woman.”⁵³ Stanton warned: “This ‘whiskey war,’ as now waged, is mob

law, nothing more nor less, and neither church influence, psalms nor prayers can sanctify it.”⁵⁴ Stewart recalled in *Memories of the Crusade* (1890): “Among the beginners of the temperance movement, those that came and stood by my side first were believers in the principles of suffrage,” however, she continued, “in our work as it was presented to us, there was no occasion for introducing the suffrage question.”⁵⁵ Temperance and suffrage would not be conjoined until 1879, upon the ascension of Frances Willard to the presidency of the WCTU.⁵⁶

Stanton echoed the view, shared by many others, that the Crusade was a form of mob rule. The USBA, in its account of the reform movement at their 1874 convention, called the women’s actions “one of the most peculiar manifestations of zealotism aroused in the breast of hysterical women by the trickery of men who had neither the courage nor the manhood to attack their opponents, save from behind the inviolable bulwark of petticoats.”⁵⁷ B.V.A. wrote to the *Cincinnati Commercial*, explaining: “It is not a free country when such mob law prevails as that at Wilmington, New Vienna, and Hillsboro. No matter if the mob is composed of females, it is still a lawless mob.”⁵⁸ Even Beadle, normally an enthusiastic supporter of the reformers, expressed concern in a March 18, 1874, *Cincinnati Commercial* article commenting, “I might almost say that this movement has been almost too successful. It has swept so many towns with such suddenness, that thousands are moved by spiritual pride, unholy exultation and a fierce determination to carry the day in all things.”⁵⁹

Resistance to the Crusaders took many forms. Some saloonkeepers simply ignored their entreaties, remained open, and presumably pocketed handsome profits thanks to the number of competing saloons shuttered across the town. Others, like the druggist Dunn in Hillsboro, sought injunctions against the Crusaders to prevent them from disrupting their legitimate businesses. James Clyde Sellman’s examination of the 1874 Women’s Crusade in Richmond, Indiana, a city

of 11,000 across the Indiana border from Ohio, depicted the collapse of the Crusade in that city in large part because of the increasingly aggressive tactics of the Crusaders. He portrayed German resistance to the Crusade as a form of parody. German women disguised themselves as Crusaders, marched into a saloon and, to the surprise of all, ordered a beer and broke out into German drinking songs.⁶⁰ In Steubenville, Ohio, a mid-sized city 100 miles to the east of Cincinnati, “three hundred of the city’s elite” formed the Personal Liberty Club in response to a newly-enacted, Crusade-driven community ordinance that banned the sale of all alcohol.⁶¹ Insisting that it was the right of men to “drink early, deeply drink, then die of thirst because there is nothing more to drink,” the club was in reality a saloon doing business as a library. Membership dues bought agricultural magazines and beer, and both were readily available to members. The Personal Liberty Club dissolved in September 1874, after the furor surrounding the Crusade in Steubenville had abated.⁶²

The comparison of the Crusaders to a mob confronting German-American saloonkeepers brings into sharper focus the nativist element of the temperance movement. Vignettes of Crusade actions across southern Ohio contain frequent references to German saloonkeepers, the only ethnic group specifically identified. In Hillsboro, it was “John;” in Washington Court House, Karl Beck; in Franklin, Webber; in Oxford, Wertz; and in Morrow, it was Henry Schiede and Max Goepper.⁶³ The latter was the brother of Michael Goepper, the Ohio State Senator who cast the lone Republican vote against the Adair Law and a successful Cincinnati malt broker – a key ingredient in the production of beer.⁶⁴ In Findlay, the local police arrested an “old German” for selling beer against a local ordinance. Wittenmyer related that, after he was jailed, a “band of Germans took him out of prison” and lamented, “A few Germans defy public sentiment and override the decrees of the court.”⁶⁵

M. Beuhle asserted in a March 27, 1874 letter to the *Findlay Jeffersonian*, a pro-temperance newspaper that, on the orders of the city council, the police would “arrest the first German who utters the first word against these doings and if he does not go willingly, he shall be shot.” Beuhle went on to relate three prayers that he had heard offered in temperance meetings. The first beseeched God to “sink all of the ships” carrying German immigrants; the second requested that the reformer lived long enough to “have all Germans murdered”; and the third wished to see the “heart torn out of the body of every German.”⁶⁶ In a *Cincinnati Enquirer* article, Beadle commented on the “ugly shape” the movement was assuming, and expressed his concern about the conflict forming between “Germans and the native-born citizens.” He noted: “They [the Germans] cannot appreciate the religious element taking on this peculiar direction. They look upon the Crusade either as pure foolishness or as a wanton, causeless attack on them and their legitimate business.”⁶⁷ Isolated in small towns across Ohio, facing a threatening reform movement with its nativist context, and composed of socially- and economically- elite citizens, German saloonkeepers frequently had little choice but to accede to the Crusaders’ demands and to close their businesses.

The question, then, is what was the source of the Crusade’s success? Was it in the power of moral suasion as both Beecher and Lewis argued, or was the success actually a form of intimidation imposed by “mob rule” that found its biggest success in small towns with isolated immigrant communities? The answer may lie partly in Lewis’s contention that the Crusade was a “plan of work as adapted to towns and small cities of not more than five thousand residents.”⁶⁸ In early March 1874, the Crusaders turned their sights on Cincinnati for the first real test of the power of moral suasion in the midst of a large consolidated German community and its deeply rooted brewing industry.

A March 11, 1874, *Cincinnati Enquirer* story, headlined “TEMPERANCE IN CINCINNATI,” heralded the launch of the Crusader movement in the Queen City. The article chronicled the results of four organizational meetings held the day before at the First Presbyterian Church, the Fifth Presbyterian Church, the Baptist Church of Columbia, and Wesley Chapel Church.⁶⁹ The course the movement took in Cincinnati mirrored the strategies employed in smaller towns across the state. Roving bands of women, dressed in black and moving in columns “two-by-two,” protested the sale of liquor and beer in prayer and with hymns both inside saloons, when permitted by the saloonkeeper, and outside, when denied access.

Anglo-American in ethnicity and Protestant, mostly Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist in religion, the Crusaders in Cincinnati resembled their sister reformers from across the state. Like their compatriots they formed a fairly narrow socio-economic band as the upper-middle-class wives of businessmen and clergymen. The wife of the pastor of Columbia’s Baptist Church, Mrs. S. K. Leavitt, one of the leaders of the WTC in Cincinnati, and the future treasurer of the WCTU, recounted that she led a prayer band of eighty women whose aggregate wealth amounted to over \$3,000,000, or over \$66,000,000 in 2020 dollars.⁷⁰

If the Crusade’s tactics and the composition of the reformers in the Queen City closely mirrored the movement’s efforts across Ohio, Cincinnati’s size and its diverse population presented significant and what later proved to be insurmountable challenges, demonstrating the limits of moral suasion. On the Crusade’s first day in Cincinnati, an “attack” on the “outpost at Columbia,” the editorial staff of the *Cincinnati Enquirer* observed, “The Amazonian army is partial to unfortified hamlets. When they compel a city of two hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants to capitulate we will subscribe to their faith.”⁷¹ Small-scale confrontations between German-American saloonkeepers and temperance reformers formed a common feature of

Crusader activity across Ohio, but Cincinnati's large German-American community, with its social and economic influence, presented a formidable challenge to the reformers' zeal.

Cincinnati's population stood at 216,239 in 1870, an increase of over 25% since the outbreak of the Civil War, and the city was home to nearly 50,000 German-born residents, accounting for nearly 23% its residents, plus nearly an equal number of second-generation German-Americans whose sympathies remained rooted in German culture.⁷² The Queen City's strong Germanic influence represented a sharp contrast to the reformers' earlier experience in Washington Court House that counted only 135 German-born residents or less than one percent of the population.⁷³

Cincinnati's "Over-the-Rhine" district was the traditional home for German-Americans. However, by 1870, thanks to the city's expansion and the upward social mobility of German immigrants and their offspring, the neighborhood had already begun a slow decline, threatening the character of its homogeneity as a German enclave. Nonetheless, while only slightly less than a quarter of the residents living in the district were of German birth, the district remained home to much of German cultural life, with its theatres, restaurants, churches and saloons, and, especially, its beer gardens.⁷⁴

Beyond the centrality of Over-the-Rhine to German-Americans' cultural life, immigrants to Cincinnati could find a wide array of social and business connections there. The *1874 Williams City Directory* listed thirty-six clubs and social organizations for Germans and twenty-six Catholic parishes and Protestant churches.⁷⁵ German-owned banks, law firms, medical practices, and insurance companies kept a German newcomer to the Queen City wrapped tightly in a cocoon of familiar language, culture, and values.

Beer was at the center of the celebration of Germanness. Carl Rümelin, a German immigrant and former Ohio Congressman, placed “the convivial daily gathering around the beer-table” at the center of Germandom, or what it meant to be a German.⁷⁶ Nowhere was this pride of culture and heritage on better display than in the Over-the-Rhine district. A November 26, 1875, *Cincinnati Enquirer* article, “Advice to the Young: A Sunday Night Trip Over The Rhine,” described a “land where beer and pretzels predominate,” and offered the reader a tour of the district that included visits to Lowens’ Beer Garden, Hildebrandt’s Hall, Schumanns, and Germania Hall.⁷⁷ Music, an excess of beer, and boisterous crowds set the tone for the evening. Temperance supporters were assuredly dismayed to read about this Sunday celebration of German-American festivity. One *Cincinnati* publication later portrayed the Over-the-Rhine district as a foreign country unto itself, where “rivers of beer, mountains of pretzels, and huge carts of sausages disappear down the Teutonic throat daily.”⁷⁸

Beyond the size of *Cincinnati*’s German-American population and its sense of place in the American mainstream, the financial importance of the brewing industry in the Queen City raised the stakes in the confrontation between German-Americans and reformers by making it a fight for both personal and economic liberty. The first German brewers appeared in *Cincinnati* in the 1840s and, by 1860, the Queen City’s German-owned breweries dominated the local brewing industry.⁷⁹ In large part, the rise of the German brewing interests resulted from the technological shift that allowed the production of bottom-fermented lager to replace top-fermented ale as the beverage of choice for the burgeoning German customer base. Dannebaum estimated that by 1870, thirty-three million dollars had been invested in the brewing and distilling businesses in *Cincinnati*, and the industry employed between 30,000 and 40,000 first- and second-generation German-Americans.⁸⁰ Between July 1, 1873, and June 30, 1874,

Cincinnati's brewing industry produced 465,886 barrels of beer valued at \$4,199,940, over \$95,000,000 in 2020 dollars.⁸¹

German-Americans not only produced and consumed vast quantities of beer, but they also proved to be prolific dispensers of the beverage as well. The *1874 Williams City Directory for Cincinnati* listed over 1,300 saloons, including 791 establishments whose proprietors had German surnames.⁸² Murray Shipley, who presided over an early Wesley Chapel temperance meeting, calculated that in the portion of the city that ran west of Main Street there were "3,071 places, occupying 27 squares, or 110 acres of real estate" where beer, wine, and liquor could be purchased. Shipley estimated the total value of the real estate occupied by purveyors engaged in the sale of alcoholic beverages to be \$15,000,000, in 1874 dollars.⁸³

By the early 1870s, the brewing and distilling industry, with its collateral enterprises such as transportation, cooperage, grain and malt production, and the extended network of retail outlets, played a significant role in driving Cincinnati's economy. As early as March 13, 1874, just as the Crusade in Cincinnati was getting underway, the *Enquirer's* editors observed, "The Whisky Crusade is effecting the business of Cincinnati materially. Next to pork, whisky is our main dependence."⁸⁴ Two weeks later, an *Enquirer* article asserted, "The woman's whisky war is . . . in many respects exerting an influence highly detrimental to the growth and prosperity of our city."⁸⁵ Wittenmyer explained that, in the course of the first six months of Crusade activity, Cincinnati's "United States Revenue District" saw a "falling off in the revenue on liquor alone" of about \$3,000,000.⁸⁶ The Queen City's commercial sector, even beyond the brewing and liquor interests, had much at stake in the confrontation between temperance and anti-temperance forces.

Political influence accompanied the economic advantage enjoyed by the brewing industry and helped the anti-temperance forces to counter and shape the nature of the protest in

Cincinnati. Seasoned Queen City politicians in 1874 likely recalled the anti-temperance victories, achieved in large part thanks to the German-American vote, in the 1853 state and local elections. German-American influence in Cincinnati's civic affairs only grew stronger in the intervening years thanks to the swelling immigrant population.

Evidence of the sway German brewing and liquor interests held in local politics can be found in the response of Cincinnati's city government to Crusader activity. Leavitt declared that twenty-three members of the fifty-member Board of Councilmen "were in the liquor trade" and, throughout the spring, city government actions constrained Crusader activity.⁸⁷ On March 30, 1874, George W. C. Johnston, Cincinnati's Democratic Mayor, issued a sidewalk ordinance forbidding the blocking of public thoroughfares requiring Crusaders to change their tactics from praying and singing at the entrance of saloons, to parading up and down the street past their storefronts.⁸⁸ Blocker suggested that Johnston's action came in answer to a huge anti-Crusade rally two days earlier.⁸⁹ Johnston, in response to the Crusaders' request for protection, after a particularly threatening confrontation that included a "violent and obscene German woman," replied that the city did not have enough police to protect the women. He proclaimed, "the whole of the Board of Police Commissioners are opposed" to the reformers' efforts.⁹⁰

Some in the German-American community expressed their discomfort with the brewing industry's dominance of Cincinnati's economic and political landscape. The *Cincinnati Commercial* concurred with the editorial staff of the *Cincinnati Volksblatt*, one of the Queen City's German-language newspapers, which "called attention to the domineering attitude of a few brewers in our politics." The editor of the *Volksblatt* went on to decry: "It is unfortunate and unwholesome that the beer making and selling interest should be . . . as identical with all of the splendor and glory of Germany."⁹¹

The seeds of labor unrest, that blossomed in the early 1880s, were sown in the early 1870s within the brewing industry as well. Brewery workers received, on average, \$1.80 per day, far below the \$5.00 per day average that a bricklayer earned. Brewery wages ranked barely above the wages of unskilled day laborers.⁹² Nonetheless, while the brewers themselves might have fallen into disfavor in the eyes of some working-class German-Americans, their cultural affinity for beer and the festive culture of the Over-the-Rhine district nonetheless remained as strong as ever.

Nativism posed a latent force within the reform movement across Ohio. Cincinnati's vibrant German community, with its economic interest in and its unabashed cultural affection for beer, meant the dark specter of nativism confronted fiercer opposition in the Queen City than in the more homogenous small towns in Ohio. Wittenmyer's appraisal of Cincinnati's German community echoed Beecher's earlier protest in his *A Plea for the West*. "Many of them [German immigrants] were ignorant bigots or infidels, who were ready, on any pretext, to cry out against the Bible and Puritanism," she declared, "and many belonged to the criminal classes as the police records will show."⁹³

Much of the conflict between the Anglo-American Protestant and German-American cultures centered on the German love of beer and their anti-sabbatarian practices such as Sunday afternoons spent relaxing in a beer garden. One *Cincinnati Gazette* editorial read "if the guzzling of beer is to be the chief end of their existence, they must not be surprised if they incur the dislike and contempt of those who have a due regard for the interests of the community."⁹⁴ Most Germans were comfortable in the ambiguity created by their divided loyalties to America and the immigrants' desire to retain their cultural heritage. American reformers, on the other hand, fueled

by Beecher's Puritan vision of a pure, homogenous West, vigorously opposed anything that strayed from their ideal.

A German Methodist Episcopal minister, the Reverend Mr. Jacob Krebehl, captured the divide in remarks he gave at a March 9, 1874, anti-temperance rally. He called for the failure of the Crusaders' efforts because "the education of Germans was different from that of the Americans. An American saloonkeeper felt he was in a disreputable business. The German saloonkeeper thought he was right, and in a legitimate, honorable business."⁹⁵ Early in the reformers' efforts, on March 14, 1874, the German saloonkeepers organized a mass meeting to formulate a response to the praying bands. "Some of the Germans have already drawn the line of demarcation," the *Commercial* reported, "and propose not to deal with any grocer, manufacturer, or other businessman, who favors the temperance movement."⁹⁶ The German saloonkeepers' embargo demonstrated that, unlike their encounters in smaller towns, Cincinnati's Crusaders found themselves facing a united and financially powerful opposition.

Opposing views of religion provided the sharpest contrast between the supporters of Crusade movement—both the women who marched and the clergy who encouraged their efforts—and members of Cincinnati's German-American community. Untethered to Beecher's post-millennial imperative, German-Americans found offensive and bewildering the insertion of religion into the temperance debate. They found no biblical evidence to support the temperance cause. The Reverend G.W. Eisenlohr, of the German Evangelical Church of St. Paul, pointed to Jesus' regular use of wine to ask the Crusaders if they were "making Jesus a sinner himself, and want to be holier and more perfect than the Savior."⁹⁷ Linking the challenge to personal liberty to the religious argument, Eisenlohr compared the removal of dietary laws by the early Christians to the temperance debate. "Everyone ought to act according to his conscience," he declared, "for

whoever deems it a sin to drink, to him it is a sin, and whoever does not deem it a sin to drink for him, it is not a sin.”⁹⁸

The use of public prayer in the service of the temperance cause presented a second religious challenge for German-Americans. Anti-temperance supporters asserted that the “word of God” was being used to “sow hatred, enmity, and discord” in the temperance confrontation.⁹⁹ Eisenlohr accused reformers of dragging “the name of the Most High as it were in the gutters.”¹⁰⁰ By refusing to accept the Biblical basis for temperance, German-Americans were doubly offended by the prayer bands’ public invocation of religion as a basis for their argument.

The leading role women played in the Crusade movement provided a second significant area of confrontation. German cultural traditions ran counter to the public role women played in the protest movement. At a mass meeting in Cincinnati’s Turner Hall on March 17, 1874, the Reverend Pastor August Kroell, “condemned the women in unmeasured terms.” “A woman’s place was at home,” he declared, “not on the streets.”¹⁰¹ A *Volksblatt* editorial proclaimed: “A woman belongs at home, to oversee her household and to educate her children.” The Crusade was, from the *Volksblatt*’s editorial perspective, “a foolish proceeding which one only expects of crazy people.”¹⁰² Opposition to the role of women in the temperance movement was not confined to men. In a letter to the *Enquirer*, the “Many Ladies of the German Evangelical Congregation” asserted: “Women’s duties are holy, and if the hypocritical fanatics would remember this they would endeavor to make men better and nobler through education.”¹⁰³ Thanks to the heavy nativist undertones within the temperance movement, it is unlikely that German-American women might have found themselves welcomed into the Crusader fold. The vitriolic language the German-Americans employed in attacking the Crusaders closely paralleled the nativist characterizations utilized by the reformers to attack the German immigrant community.

The characterization of the reformers as “hypocritical” reflected the German-American leaders’ distrust of Anglo-American society’s “proclivity toward materialism.”¹⁰⁴ Writing in 1889 Anton Walburg, a German Catholic priest living in Cincinnati, criticized American society as a “pharisaical, hypocritical spirit” wrapped “in a garb of virtue when all is hollowness and rottenness within.”¹⁰⁵ In a March 1, 1874, sermon, Eisenlohr declared that intemperance in the form of “luxury in dress” was a crime made “principally by those who have instituted such a fanatical crusade against drinking” and had “desolated many happy homes.”¹⁰⁶ Temperance opponents pointed to the folly of the women’s arguments for temperance in light of their own intemperate habits of dress, diet, and their demand for consumer goods and “the desire to outshine her neighbors,” Eisenlohr argued.¹⁰⁷

The relative value of beer as a “healthy” drink served up another matter of heated debate. The USBA quoted a *New York Herald* correspondent who asserted that German Chancellor Bismarck’s success as the leader of the newly united Germany was due, in part, to the “quantities of beer he drinks while he dictates and decides questions of state policy in the evening.”¹⁰⁸ Cincinnati Rabbi Isaac Wise, in response to a Crusader’s statement that “beer did not intoxicate, but stupefied,” asked: “How is it that beer-drinkers Schiller, Goethe, and Heine, the great poets sprung?”¹⁰⁹ Brewers, eager to distance themselves from distillers, were always quick to point out the more intense intoxicating effects of spirituous liquors than beer.

Unlike Crusader narratives from small towns across Ohio, which were filled with accounts of signed temperance pledges from saloonkeepers and druggists, Crusaders reported similar “victories” in Cincinnati only infrequently. The Crusade’s momentum in the face of united anti-temperance opposition, a city administration fearful of losing the German-American vote, and the dire economic implications of temperance began to fade as the calendar turned

from March to April in 1874. An *Enquirer* correspondent reported on April 15: “The public meetings for prayer, song, and exhortation continue about as usual day after day, and begin to sadly lack interest to a reporter, whose ruling desire in life is for something new.”¹¹⁰ Something new—the climax of the Crusade in Cincinnati—arrived a few weeks later.

Declaring themselves “subject unto higher powers,” on May 15, 1874, the reformers defied the city ordinance banning sidewalk protests and knelt in prayer before the saloons along Cincinnati’s Freeman Street.¹¹¹ As they prayed, Leavitt recalled, “a policeman laid his hand on my shoulder and announced: ‘Mrs. Leavitt, you are under arrest.’”¹¹² The entire prayer band, composed of “six ministers wives, three wives of rich bankers, and all the rest of wealthy citizens” marched two miles to the police station for arraignment.¹¹³ The Crusaders had their day in court a few days later, where the judge found them guilty and admonished the women to obey the city’s ordinance.¹¹⁴ Fearful of facing further arrests, Leavitt remembered: “the Crusade had begun to change its form from active Crusading into steady, organized work, so we only went out in groups of three or four.”¹¹⁵ Although Crusader activity in Cincinnati continued sporadically until June 19, the energy had gone out of the movement as the Crusaders turned their focus to the organization of the WCTU.

There was little apparent lasting impact of the Crusade in Cincinnati, at least in terms of its appetite for beer. Local brewers produced a little over 344,000 barrels for internal consumption the year of the Crusade. A year later, in 1875, local consumption rose to nearly 351,000 barrels.¹¹⁶ The Over-the-Rhine neighborhood retained its festive character. As late as 1900, the district remained “a kind of spiritual core” of the Queen City’s German-American community.¹¹⁷

The reformers' unintended outcome provided the most telling impact of the temperance action. In fact, the confrontation in the spring 1874 served to coalesce the highly diverse German community in support of the anti-temperance cause. An anti-temperance Democratic Party ticket swept the local elections in April 1874 in town after town, partly in response to the Crusade activity.

Dio Lewis published a short tract in 1875, "*Prohibition: A Failure*," arguing that the reformers' militant approach may not have served the cause well. Lewis wrote: "The whole world is at liberty to reason, exhort, and plead with him [the drunkard], but if we shout at him, 'You shall not,' he either defies us or goes his own way, or if we contrive to take away from him his personal liberty, his right of choice, he is no longer a free man, but a slave."¹¹⁸ Paradoxically, Lewis' 1875 argument for personal liberty formed the core of German-American resistance to the temperance movement in the decades to come.

Writing in 1876, Anne Wittenmyer reflected on the outcome of the Crusaders' efforts. She observed that "today the disgraceful and humiliating fact exists that there are more places where liquors are sold than before the Crusade," and asked if "the movement was a failure?" The twin accomplishments of the Crusade were, in Wittenmyer's estimation, the demonstrated power of women in the temperance conflict and the capacity for the "praying bands to become organized (as the) *Women's Christian Temperance Unions*."¹¹⁹ The Crusaders, after demonstrating their collective power, built upon the effective statewide network the movement spawned and, in June 1874, organized the Women's Christian Temperance Union of Ohio. By November of that year, a convention of similar state organizations from across the United States met in Cleveland, Ohio, to launch the WTCU.¹²⁰ Taking the long view, the Women's

Temperance Crusade, with its transformation into the WCTU, launched a cycle of reform that a half-century later transformed America with the passage of the 1919 Volstead Act.

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Chapter Five

Forging the Fragile German-American Identity

German immigrants who arrived in the United States during the middle decades of the nineteenth century held a *Weltanschauung* steeped in the tradition and the liberal values of the European Enlightenment as opposed to the moralistic strictures of the Second Great Awakening. The stark contrast between the “moral nationalism” espoused by America’s nineteenth-century reformers ran counter to the tradition of “liberal nationalism” that German immigrants imported to the United States. In the quarter century between 1850 and 1875, German-Americans could not ignore the rising tide of temperance, Sabbatarianism, and nativism in their adopted homeland. German-Americans, proud of their support of the North’s cause in the Civil War, deeply believed that their battlefield sacrifices brought them onto an equal footing in American life with their native-born countrymen. The renewed strength of the post-war Puritan ideology, evidenced by the passage of restrictive legislation and the rise of the Women’s Temperance Crusade, caused them to band together in fierce defense of their “Germanness.”

The fundamental question of this study has been the role the fight for personal liberty played in the development of a German-American ethnicity within the tapestry of American life. Henry Shapiro noted the difficulty containing German-Americans within a single ethnic group: “. . . they were divided among themselves according to their identification with particular social classes within German-America, communal groups with Cincinnati or the United States more generally, or attitudes toward slavery, equal rights, so forth.”¹ The centrality of their festive culture, *Gemütlichkeit*, offered German-Americans a common rallying point, and its defense required a common effort. “What united them [German-Americans] all,” Kathleen Neils Conzen

declared, “was only their shared commitment to the rites of sociability and festivity . . . ,” and that made them a force to be reckoned with.²

The role of crisis in the process of creating ethnic identity is the focal point of this study. Zane Miller compared the development of German-American ethnicity with W. E. B. DuBois’ analysis of African-American ethnic formation in his classic 1899 demographic study, *The Philadelphia Negro*. The two groups, in Miller’s estimation, employed similar motives, visions and strategies designed to preserve and sustain their respective ethnic groups. Miller wrote: “Both began . . . by articulating a sense of crisis – the potential for the disappearance of group identity and the values and institutions that supported it.”³ German-Americans were caught off guard by the religious fervor of the reformers, within the context of the Women’s Temperance Crusade, and responded with increasingly virulent anti-reform rhetoric.

At the height of the WTC, in Spring 1874, thanks to the “praying bands” of women, heightened tensions reached a peak between temperance advocates and German-Americans. The editor of the Covington, Kentucky, German newspaper *Die Gegenwart*, thundered: “. . . the greatest crime of the Methodists is this: That in their churches they adopt resolutions that are inimical to the liberties of the people . . . They come together in their churches, and conspire, and discuss, and resolve how they may attack the property, and business, and the lives of their fellow men. They come from their churches in troops, and interfere with the business of our countrymen, threaten them with death, and deprive them of their liberty. They pray that their God may strike the saloonists and their families dead.”⁴

Recalling German-Americans’ contributions and sacrifices on Civil War battlefields less than a decade earlier, the writer went on to “wave the bloody shirt” and call on German-Americans to unite together in violent defense of their personal liberty: “We say to this band,

Halt! For your hour has come. *Become a man and a citizen, or you must be destroyed.* We fed the South with powder and lead, when it attacked the rights and existence of this country. Just so this rabble must be destroyed.”⁵

A mass anti-temperance meeting held in Cincinnati in March 1874 produced a manifesto that called on all German citizens, “without difference to religion,” to “organize in order that we may be better able, after deliberation, to cope with this nuisance”⁶ The writers presented nine resolutions and articulated the full range of German-American objections to the alcohol reform movement. The fourth resolution called the “women’s war on whiskey an unlawful one, and argued that a hypocritical attack is made by it upon social liberty, and sacrilege is committed upon religious exercises, especially in the exercise of prayer . . . which is destined not to take place at street corners, but in the solitude of a closed room. To term it [the Women’s Temperance Crusade] in short words, we can call it nothing but lunacy, and a fanatical swindle.”⁷

The fifth paragraph expressed German-American perspectives on gender in the context of the WTC: “That we in this movement recognize a total revolution of the Christian social orders by which the man is the head of the woman, not the opposite.” The writers then went on to exhort the reformers “to consider that Christianity first raised the woman to an equal being with the man, but surely not to the end that the man should become a slave of their notions and imbecile ideas.”⁸

Finally, in the penultimate paragraph, the manifesto promised “That we will give no candidate, be it for state, county, or city office, our support or vote who takes part in this movement.” The commitment to create a German-American voting bloc, without regard to religious considerations, would receive a severe test in the 1875 Ohio gubernatorial campaign.

The nearly ten to one voting margin to defeat the proposed 1874 Ohio constitution in Cincinnati's German wards offers ample evidence of German-Americans' capacity to turn their militant response to temperance advocates into action at the polling booth. In the aftermath of that referendum, Ohio's Republican politicians recognized the imperative to capture as much of the German-American vote as possible, if they hoped to prevail in the 1875 gubernatorial campaign. Former Governor Rutherford B. Hayes secured the Republican party's nomination that year after a hard-fought convention battle with Alfonso Taft, the father of future President William Howard Taft. Early in the campaign, one of Hayes' advisors counseled: "You will receive the votes of all Germans who are Republicans if the temperance issue is not made."⁹ Consequently, unlike its 1874 party platform with its explicit plank recommending full enforcement of all anti-alcohol statutes, the 1875 Republican platform approved by the party's convention made no mention of temperance.¹⁰

Republicans across the country viewed the 1875 election in Ohio as a crucial referendum on the party's national economic policy of "hard-money" in advance of the 1876 presidential contest.¹¹ As far away as Boston, Massachusetts, Charles Francis Adams Jr., the scion of two presidents of the United States – John Adams and John Quincy Adams – recognized the importance of the German-American vote to Hayes' chances. In summer 1875, Adams implored Carl Schurz, a Forty-Eighter, Civil War general, and former United States Senator from Missouri to return from his sabbatical in Switzerland and campaign on Hayes' behalf. "The weapon with which to kill him [incumbent Governor William Allen, the Democratic nominee] is the German vote, – it is the only effective weapon at hand and you are its holder."¹² After initially demurring, "finding no urgent reason for going into the Ohio campaign," Schurz reversed course and, in September 1875, appeared in Cincinnati's Turner Hall. The venue was so crowded that "all of

the approaches . . . were so solidly packed that any entrance was impossible,” confirming Schurz’s popularity and Adams’ wisdom.”¹³

Adams claimed credit for Hayes’ victory in the October 1875 general elections, writing to Schurz: “I got home this morning, serene in the knowledge that “old Bill Allen’s” grey and gory scalp was safely dangling at your girdle. The world will never know it, but *I* was a leading factor in yesterday’s result, for it was I who first agitated your return as the one helve which could complete the German axe necessary to the braining of that aged barbarian.”¹⁴

That said, German-American voting patterns in the 1875 election demonstrate the fragility of the German-American ethnic coalition and the centrality of the fight against temperance reformers to its maintenance. In order to counter the German-American support of the Democratic ticket, Hayes employed virulently anti-Catholic rhetoric to divide German-American voters and to mobilize Protestant German-Americans against their fellow German-American Catholics. A Canton, Ohio lawyer and future president of the United States, William McKinley, advised Hayes: “[My] district contains a large Catholic population which is thoroughly democratic, a large protestant german [*sic*] element that hitherto have been mainly democratic, they hate the catholics – their votes we must get.”¹⁵

In the aftermath of Hayes’ victory, the editors of the *Enquirer* complained: “Our German Protestant friends have been misrepresented . . . they think more of their religion than they do of brewing or drinking beer. They have been cheated.”¹⁶ The vote totals confirmed the *Enquirer*’s appraisal of the “unbroken German vote.”¹⁷ While the *Enquirer*’s tally reflected a razor-thin 499 vote margin out of 48,547 cast in Hamilton County, the five wards in the German-American Over the Rhine district delivered 5,437 votes for Hayes and 2,825 for Allen, a margin of nearly two to one.¹⁸ From the *Enquirer*’s editorial staff’s perspective, the “unbroken German vote”

meant that they had laid down their fight for personal liberty in favor of Hayes' appeal to their Protestant religion with his virulently anti-Catholic rhetoric.

German-Americans might have believed that the legislative actions defenestrating the Adair Law, the failure of the licensing question in 1874, and Hayes' willingness to put the temperance question aside in the 1875 election, signaled the diminishment of the threat to their personal liberty. But their respite was short-lived. Capitalizing on the energy of the Crusade, the WTC leadership met in 1874 to form the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) of Ohio "intended to open the political system to women's influence and thereby bring temperance reform and women's activism into the political mainstream."¹⁹ By 1890, the WCTU had grown into one of America's most influential national social movements with nearly 150,000 dues-paying members. They kept temperance reform at the forefront of the American political conversation until the passage of the Volstead Act in 1919.²⁰

Historians generally mark the 1890s as the period when the decline of German-America began. German immigration peaked in the decade of the 1880s, with 1,453,970 Germans arriving in the United States. Immigration from Germany fell by almost two-thirds over the course of the next decade to 505,152, the fewest since the 1840s.²¹ James M. Berquist argued that successive waves of immigrants served to undergird German-American life as the children and grandchildren of German immigrants fully assimilated. In 1898 the editor of St. Louis' *Westliche Post* lamented: "Immigration has not kept pace with the mortality of German-Americans. Of the children of German-born citizens, only a small percentage is interested in their father's language and newspapers."²² Only a decade later, 90% of German-born residents in the United States initiated naturalization papers for citizenship, leading all ethnic groups.²³ By the end of the First World War, thanks to the intense anti-German feelings aroused during and

immediately after the war's close, German-America, as a matter of survival, largely disappeared. They had become fully Americanized. With the demise of German-America as a political and social force, the temperance reformers triumphed in their century long battle against the sale of alcohol. In 1919, Nebraska became the thirty-sixth state to ratify the Eighteenth Amendment, embedding Prohibition into the United States Constitution. The German-American fight for personal liberty was seemingly lost.

In the aftermath of World War I, Americans' deep antipathy to all things German caused German-America to largely submerge into American culture. However, German-Americans' love of festivity already was deeply embedded in American life. As early as 1883, one observer noted: "The German notion that it is a good thing to have a good time has found a lodgment in the American mind."²⁴ The early death of the Prohibition experiment – the Eighteenth Amendment was repealed in 1933 – was, in part, the result of the seventy-five-year long fight for personal liberty waged by the first generations of German immigrants.

John Higham divided nineteenth-century immigration patterns into an "old immigration," composed of primarily German, Irish, English, and Scots immigrants, that lasted for most of the century and a "new immigration," beginning in the 1880s, that consisted of Italians and Eastern Europeans.²⁵ As the pattern of immigration in the United States shifted, the pillars supporting German-Americans began to erode. The habits of mutual association – *Vereinsleben* – a central element of German-American urban life, quickly dissolved in the years leading up to World War I, a period of decreasing German immigration. In those years, second-generation German-Americans migrated away from traditional German neighborhoods and more recent immigrants replaced them. German schools, once the staple of small-town German-America, and German language classes in urban school districts, declined in the wake of rabid

anti-German sentiments during World War I. At the beginning of the twentieth century, a German speaker felt at home in Cincinnati's Over-the-Rhine district. By the end of the twentieth century, a visitor from Germany to the Over-the-Rhine district would be hard-pressed to hear a word in the German language.

What the German visitor will recognize, and the American visitors to the Over-the-Rhine district clearly enjoy, are the remnants of the German-American attachment to public festivity. The Moerlein Lager House carries the name of one of Cincinnati's earliest brewers and, today, features beers brewed in the style of nineteenth-century Moerlein products. The Rhinegeist Brewery pours *Kölsch* and Hefeweizen style beers brewed to German standards alongside barrels of Budweiser, Miller, and Coors – products of the most successful nineteenth century German-American brewers that remain ubiquitous today. Mecklenburg Gardens, modeled on a traditional German beer garden and in continuous operation since 1865, serves beers and food that would be familiar to any German visitor. Cincinnati's most public acknowledgement of the city's German heritage – *Oktoberfest* – draws nearly 500,000 people to the festivities held from August until October each year, making the celebration the largest in the nation.²⁶

President John F. Kennedy, in *A Nation of Immigrants* (1964), asserted that all Americans “owe the mellowing of the austere Puritan imprint on our daily lives” to the German immigrants’ defense of “the Continental Sunday as a day . . . of relaxation, of picnics, of visiting, of quiet drinking in beer gardens while listening to the music of a band.”²⁷ Despite the immigrants’ differences in class, religion, education, and political ideologies, German-Americans found in their “tenacious defense of an alternate public sociability” the nucleus of their unique ethnicity within the tumultuous middle decades of the nineteenth century. As this study has underscored their struggle with native-born reformers forced German-Americans to put aside their Old World

differences and confront the challenges presented by a New World unified by a newly-formed, common ethnicity. Their fight for personal liberty proved to be German-Americans' most visible and enduring contribution to American life.

End Notes

¹ Henry D. Shapiro, in *Ethnic Diversity and Civic Identity: Patterns of Conflict and Cohesion in Cincinnati Since 1820*, eds. Henry D. Shapiro and Jonathan Sarna (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 12.

² Kathleen Neils Conzen, “Ethnicity as Festive Culture: Nineteenth-Century German America on Parade,” in *The Invention of Ethnicity*, ed. Werner Sollors (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 74.

³ Zane Miller, “The Invention of an Ethnic Group,” in *Ethnic Diversity and Civic Identity*, 171.

⁴ J. E. Stebbins and T. A. H. Brown, *Fifty Years History of the Temperance Cause* (Hartford CT: L. Stebbins, 1874), 492.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., 494.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Stephen DeCanio, *Democracy and the Origins of the American Regulatory State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 140.

¹⁰ Joseph Patterson Smith, *History of the Republican Party in Ohio and Memoirs of its Representative Supporters, Volume II* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1898), 287.

¹¹ DeCanio, *Democracy and the Origins of the American Regulatory State*, 135.

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- ¹² Charles Francis Adams Jr. to Carl Schurz, July 16, 1875, in *Speeches, Correspondence, and Political Papers of Carl Schurz, Volume III*, ed. Frederic Bancroft (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1913), 157.
- ¹³ Alphonso Hart to Carl Schurz, October 16, 1875, in *ibid.*, 216.
- ¹⁴ Charles Francis Adams Jr. to Carl Schurz, October 13, 1875, in *ibid.*, 215.
- ¹⁵ William McKinley to Rutherford B. Hayes, June 8, 1875, quoted in DeCanio, *Democracy and the Origins of the American Regulatory State*, 140.
- ¹⁶ *Cincinnati Enquirer*, October 15, 1874, 4.
- ¹⁷ *Cincinnati Enquirer*, October 14, 1874, 10.
- ¹⁸ *Cincinnati Enquirer*, October 14, 1874, 5.
- ¹⁹ Thomas R. Pegram, *Battling Demon Rum: The Struggle for a Dry America, 1800 – 1933* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1998), 66.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 68.
- ²¹ Don Heinrich Tolzmann, *The German-American Experience* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2000), 223.
- ²² *Westliche Post*, June 7, 1898, quoted in James M. Berquist, "German Communities in American Cities: An Interpretation of the 19th Century," *Journal of American Ethnic History* no. 4 (fall, 1984): 17.
- ²³ John Arkas Hawgood, *The Tragedy of German-America* (1940; Reprint: New York; Arno Press and the New York Times, 1970), 291.
- ²⁴ John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860 – 1925* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 25.

²⁵ John Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 218.

²⁶ Polly Campbell, “Study: Cincinnati is the 5th best city for Oktoberfest” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, September 16, 2019, 5A.

²⁷ John Fitzgerald Kennedy, *A Nation of Immigrants* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 26.

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Appendix I:

Timeline of German-American Confrontation with the American Temperance Movement in Ohio

- 1851:** “Maine Law” enacted prohibiting the sale of alcoholic beverages in Maine.
- 1853:** Ohio’s version of the Maine Law defeated. Reformers blamed defeat on the German vote.
- 1854:** Ohio General Assembly adopted amendment to the 1851 state constitution barring consumption of alcoholic beverages at the point of sale. Provision deemed unenforceable and largely ignored.
- 1862:** United States Brewers Association (USBA) formed to lobby Congress for measures supporting the brewing industry.
- 1867:** Ohio’s local temperance organizations met to form statewide alliance.
- 1870:** Ohio’s Adair Liquor Law enacted.
- 1871:** First legal actions under the Adair Law brought in March by six wives of “drunkards” in Washington Court House, OH.
- Ohio State Supreme Court Justice, C. John Welch, issued an opinion in December extending the provisions of the Adair Law to hold defendants responsible for both past and future losses.
- 1872:** In January, Elizabeth D. (Mother) Stewart, one of the founders of the Women’s Temperance Crusade (WTC) and the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WTCU), provided testimony in a successful civil action under the Adair Law.

- 1873:** February: Judge John L. Green, in *Granger versus Knipper, et al*, effectively ruled the Adair Law unconstitutional.
- March: Democratic attempted to modify the Adair Law defeated in House and Senate committees, despite Democratic control of the Senate.
- May: Ohio State Constitutional Convention convened on May 13. The state's future role in controlling the sale of alcoholic beverages was one of the key questions before the convention.
- December: Dr. Dioclesian (Dio) Lewis spoke in Hillsborough, OH, on December 23. The first Women's Temperance Crusade actions began in Hillsborough on December 24. Crusade actions commenced on December 28, in Washington Court House, OH following a lecture there by Lewis.
- 1874:** January: Crusaders in Washington Court House successfully closed all saloons by January 2. Under the leadership of Stewart, the Women's Temperance Association formed in Springfield, OH, on January 7. *Cincinnati Commercial* reporter, J. H. Beadle, arrived on January 20, in Washington Court House, OH, to chronicle the WTC's march across Ohio.
- February: Hillsborough's Crusaders sent a circular containing instructions for crusading to 500 churches across Ohio. Statewide WTC convention held in Columbus, OH on February 13.

- March: March 11 marked the first WTC actions in Cincinnati.
- Cincinnati's German saloonkeepers held mass meeting on March 14 to organize a response to the WTC.
- Second attempt to amend the Adair Law failed in the Ohio House of Representatives despite a Democratic majority. Observers believed the WTC activity threatened Democratic legislators representing rural districts.
- Mass anti-temperance meeting held in Cincinnati on March 28.
- Cincinnati's mayor issued a proclamation forbidding blocking of public thoroughfares by Crusaders on March 30.
- April: Pro-Temperance mass meeting in Cincinnati held on April 9.
- WTC convention called on April 22 in Cincinnati to petition the constitutional convention to forbid the sale of alcoholic beverages in Ohio.
- Constitutional Convention Delegate, William Adair, proposed that the Adair Liquor Law be enshrined in the state's constitution. Proposal defeated.
- May: On May 11, the WTC in Cincinnati defied the city ordinance to keep public thoroughfares open by holding prayer sessions in front of saloons.
- The Constitutional Convention adjourned on May 15.
- Forty-three crusaders arrested in Cincinnati on May 16 for praying on public sidewalks.
- June: WTC activity in Cincinnati ended on June 19.

- August: State-wide referendum on the new constitutions held on August 18. Both the license provision and the constitution defeated.
- November: The leadership of the WTC formed the WCTU at a November 18 convention in Cleveland.
- 1875:** February: The Reese Bill amending the Adair Law was adopted.
- Ohio Republican Convention met and nominated Rutherford B. Hayes as the party's candidate for governor. The party platform made no mention of temperance.
- Carl Schurz appeared at Cincinnati's Turner Hall in September and endorsed Hayes in a bid to capture the German vote.
- Hayes elected Governor of Ohio in October.